MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning
Course 11.401
Introduction to Housing, Community, and Economic Development

Syllabus

Course Meetings: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30am to 11:00 am, 9-451.

Faculty: Justin Steil
Room 9-515
steil@mit.edu

Office hours: Please sign up on electronically: http://dusp.mit.edu/oh.
Please do not email me to set up a time unless you have a permanent conflict with Mondays from 2:00 to 5:00 pm and Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 to 12:00 pm.

Teaching Assistant: Kevin Lee
Room 9-569
kevinjl@mit.edu

Course Description:

This course provides a critical introduction to the shape and determinants of political, social, and economic inequality in urban America, and the history, development, and current prospects of the fields of housing and local economic development.

The course begins with an exploration of the way cities are used to imagine and advance utopian visions. What is justice and what does it mean in the specifically urban context? It then explores ways in which housing and community economic development policy relate to current discussions of economic and racial inequality and neighborhood change.

The second section of the course situates housing and community development policy within their historical, political, and institutional contexts. What is the relationship between federal policy and private, non-profit or social movement activism? What are the implications of the historical trajectory of federal, state, and local urban policies for poverty, economic inequality, and racial disparities in access to opportunity?

The third section of the course provides an introduction to housing policy in the United States, particularly policies designed to produce affordable housing. It explores federal policy related to private, market-rate owner and renter occupied housing; private subsidized housing; and public housing. It also presents state, local, and non-profit led strategies to create and preserve affordable housing, such as fair share requirements and builder’s remedies, inclusionary zoning, and community land trusts.
The fourth section of the course provides an introduction to community economic development policy in the United States, particularly policies focusing on small business development, low-wage workers, and economic democracy. It begins by examining theories of economic development and drivers of economic inequality. It then explores local business development, job upgrading, and economic equity policies, as well as movements for more cooperative and democratic economic structures.

The fifth section of the course uses an analysis of scale to situate housing and economic development policies in the context of federalism. Why focus on local governments and local policy? What is the balance between particularism and universalism? What role does local government law and municipal fragmentation play in perpetuating inequality in access to opportunity?

The final section of the course explores the role of the state in social welfare and the role of collective action in advancing access to opportunity.

Throughout the semester, optional, recommended readings provide examples of how these issues are being addressed in Boston, in other cities in the United States, and internationally.

Class Participation:
This is a discussion-based, rather than lecture-based, course. Students should be well prepared to participate actively in class discussions, with well-supported arguments based on the readings (not just opinions), and should make an effort to build on and react to the arguments of classmates and faculty. The quality of your participation will make up 15% of your final course grade.

Assignments:
Requirements and grading are as follows:

• **In-class participation** (15%). Be prepared, ask questions, make arguments supported by the readings, listen to each other.

• **A brief weekly response paper of roughly 500 words each** (35%). These should present a critical assessment of the assigned material and *not* a mere restatement of content. The responses give you an opportunity to analyze key ideas that cut across readings, identify questions the readings prompt you to ask, suggest critiques of the data, methodology, or conclusions, or raise concepts you want to clarify. You will be expected to submit one response per week via the Forum section of Stellar, either on Monday at 3:00 pm, discussing the Tuesday readings, or Wednesday at 3:00 pm, discussing the Thursday readings. No response paper is expected in the first or last weeks and you can choose not to submit in one week of your choice. Therefore a total of 10 responses should be submitted. The responses will be graded on a √+, √, √- scale. A “√+” will count for 5 out of 5 points, a “√” 4 out of 5 points, and a “√-” 3 out of 5 points.

• **Current event presentation** (10%). Pick two weeks to present, in pairs. Briefly present a current event relevant to that week’s readings and facilitate a 15 minute discussion exploring how the readings shed light on that event.
• **Research Paper or Project of Change Proposal** (35%). Beginning in week four, students should form groups of not more than four students to work collaboratively on either 1) a proposal for a project that responds to a contemporary issue in housing or community economic development or 2) a final research paper. The research paper or the project of change may be designed in collaboration with a local community-based organization, public agency, or by the team without outside consultation. A preliminary outline or description for the paper or project is due on **Friday, September 27, at 5:00 pm**. The preliminary outline should be 500-800 words and should describe (1) the question or problem that is the subject of the proposed research paper or project of change, (2) the theoretical concepts from the course relevant to answering the question or making the change, (3) the data (qualitative, quantitative, or archival) relevant to answering that question or designing the project, and (4) the methods of analysis or intervention that will be used. The final research paper or project of change proposal is due on **Monday, November 25 at 5:00 pm** and should not exceed 2,500 words.

• **Final Presentation** (5%). Over the last 3 days of class, each group will present their research to their classmates in a prepared presentation not to exceed 12 minutes. Presentations will be evaluated on their content, organization, delivery, and ability to end on time.

• **OPTIONAL assignment - Tremont/Washington Street walk** (Extra credit - 5%). In groups of 2 or 3, walk from the Chinatown T station to Dudley Station (about 2 miles). Observe and document some of the physical, economic, cultural, organizational, and social assets you observe, both visually and in any interactions or conversations you have with merchants, passersby, or people waiting for transit (please don’t conduct interviews, but striking up a casual conversation is encouraged). Pick one of the neighborhoods that you have walked through – Chinatown, the South End, or Lower Roxbury. How would you characterize that neighborhood’s primary strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats? What external threats and opportunities facing the area as a whole may play out in that neighborhood? Write 500-700 words briefly summarizing your analysis, with 1-3 tables of relevant data from the 2013-2017 American Community Survey that reinforce your points. **Due on Stellar Sunday, September 8 at 5:00 pm**.

**Grading Rubric**
The following grading rubric will be applied to evaluate written submissions:

I) Does it answer the question? (30%)
   i. Does it have a clear thesis that is responsive to the question?
   ii. Does it support this thesis with appropriate evidence?

II) Does it incorporate concepts and methodologies from the assigned readings? (40%)
   i. Does it interpret and apply those readings correctly?
   ii. Does it add original critiques and analyses of those readings?

III) Does it present an original argument? (20%)
   i. Does it display critical thinking?
   ii. Does it offer innovative insights?

IV) Does it present a compelling, well-structured argument? (10%)
   i. Does it have a logical structure that supports the development of the thesis?
   ii. Does it engage with counter-arguments and acknowledge weaknesses?
Grading Scale
Grades are assigned using the following scale:
A  96-100
A- 91-95
B+ 86-90
B  81-85
B- 76-80
C+ 71-75
C  66-70
C- 61-65
D+ 56-60

Late submissions
All submissions should be submitted via Stellar.
In the event that medical or other personal circumstances arise that interfere with your ability to complete assignments on time, extension requests can be made to the Office of the Dean of Graduate Education (http://odge.mit.edu). If the ODGE decides that an extension is warranted, they will send a generic note that your assignment deadline should be extended without penalty. This policy is intended to preserve your privacy.
Any assignment submitted after the deadline, without a request for an extension that was approved by ODGE, will be marked down 5 points out of 100. Any assignment more than 3 hours late will be marked down a further 10 points. A further 10 points will be deducted for each day the assignment is late.

Writing help
The WCC at MIT (Writing and Communication Center) offers free one-on-one professional advice from communication experts. The WCC is staffed completely by MIT lecturers. All have advanced degrees. All are experienced college classroom teachers of communication. All are all are published scholars and writers. Not counting the WCC’s director’s years (he started the WCC in 1982), the WCC lecturers have a combined 133 years’ worth of teaching here at MIT (ranging from 4 to 24 years). The WCC works with undergraduate, graduate students, post-docs, faculty, staff, alums, and spouses. The WCC helps you strategize about all types of academic and professional writing as well as about all aspects of oral presentations (including practicing classroom presentations & conference talks as well as designing slides). No matter what department or discipline you are in, the WCC helps you think your way more deeply into your topic, helps you see new implications in your data, research, and ideas. The WCC also helps with all English as Second Language issues, from writing and grammar to pronunciation and conversation practice. The WCC is located in E18-233, 50 Ames Street. To guarantee yourself a time, make an appointment. To register with our online scheduler and to make appointments, go to https://mit.mywconline.com/. To access the WCC’s many pages of advice about writing and oral presentations, go to http://cmsw.mit.edu/writing-and-communication-center/. Check the online scheduler for up-to-date hours and available appointments.
Academic integrity

Fundamental to the academic work you do at MIT is an expectation that you will make choices that reflect integrity and responsible behavior. Honesty is the foundation of good academic work. Do trust the value of your own intellect and credit others for their work. Do not copy ideas or phrases without citing them appropriately. Do not submit projects or papers that have been written for a previous class. See https://integrity.mit.edu/.

Safe and Equitable Learning Environment:

MIT is dedicated to providing a safe and equitable learning environment for all students. Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the Institute. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Title IX Office. This is important for the safety of the whole MIT community. Violence Prevention & Response’s hotline, 617-253-2300, provides 24/7 confidential support. Please visit https://titleix.mit.edu/ for more information on reporting options and other resources.

In-Class Field Trips

Cambridge Housing Authority (Tuesday, 10/1, 8:45-10:15 am)
Madison Park Development Corp. (Tuesday, 10/8, 9:00-10:30 am)

Optional Field Trips:

There will be several optional field trips associated with the course tentatively scheduled for the following dates:

Commonwealth Kitchen (Thursday, 9/19, 2:00-6:00 pm)
Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (Tuesday 10/22, 2:00-6:00 pm)

Optional Movies:

We will screen several optional movies with themes related to the course tentatively scheduled for the following dates:

Eyes on the Prize: The Keys to the Kingdom (1974-1980) (Tuesday 9/17 at 5:30 pm)
Holding Ground: The Rebirth of Dudley Street (Tuesday 9/24 at 5:30 pm)
Palante Siempre Palante (Tuesday 12/3 at 5:30 pm)

Optional Community meetings you could attend:

To provide context for the materials discussed in class, you may be interested in attending some community meetings. Below are several that could be particularly interesting, but any meetings would be worthwhile.

    Boston City Council – Wednesdays at 12:00 pm
    Cambridge City Council – Mondays at 5:30 pm
    Somerville Board of Alderman – 2nd and 4th Thursdays at 7:00 pm
    Boston Planning and Development Agency – select Thursdays at 3:30 pm
    City Life/Vida Urbana – Tuesdays at 6:15 pm at 284 Amory Street, Jamaica Plain
Part I: Introduction

1. **Visions of the City** (Thursday, September 5)
Moten, Fred and Stefano Harney. 2013. *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*. Wivenhoe: Undercommons. Read Chapter 5: Planning and Policy, pp. 73-82. (10 pages)

Additional resources:
Boston

Other U.S.
Right to the City. n.d. “Right to the City.” [https://righttothecity.org/](https://righttothecity.org/).

International

**OPTIONAL** Tremont/Washington Street Walk assignment due on Sunday, September 8 at 5:00pm.

2. **Justice and the City** (Tuesday, September 10)

**Additional resources:**

**Boston**


**Other U.S.**
Binet, A. and Arcaya, M. “Operationalizing the capabilities approach to understand healthy neighborhoods in a Participatory Action Research Study.” Unpublished draft. (37 pages)

**International**
3. **Urban Inequality of Wealth and Income and Race** (Thursday, September 12)

*Additional resources:*

**Boston**

**Other U.S.**


Wynter, Sylvia. “1492: A New World View,” In Vera Lawrence Hyatt and Rex Nettleford, eds. Race, Discourse and the Origin of the Americas; A New World View (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution), pp. 5-57. (53 pages)

International


Part II: The Context of Housing and Community Development Policy

4. Historical Context (Tuesday, September 17) (Optional film screening of “Eyes on the Prize: The Keys to the Kingdom (1974-1980) 5:30pm)


Recommended:

Boston

Other U.S.

International

5. Institutional Context (Thursday, September 19) (Optional field trip to Commonwealth Kitchen 2:00-6:00pm)

Recommended:
Boston


**Other U.S.**


**International**


**6. Political Context** (Tuesday, September 24) *(Optional film screening of “Holding Ground: The Rebirth of Dudley Street 5:30pm)*


**Recommended:**

**Boston**


**PROJECT OF CHANGE: The preliminary outline of your project of change is due Friday, September 27, at 5:00 pm.**

**Part III: Housing Policy**

7. **Introduction to Housing Markets and Policy** (Thursday, September 26)


*Recommended: Boston*
http://www.cityofboston.gov/dnd/boston2030.asp

Other U.S.

International
King, Robin, Marianna Orloff, Terra Virsilas, and Tejas Pande. 2017. “Confronting the Urban Housing Crisis in the Global South: Adequate, Secure, and Affordable Housing.” *World Resources Institute.* (40 pages)

Reports
Joint Center for Housing Studies. 2017. *The State of the Nation’s Housing.* Read Executive Summary, pp. 1-6. (6 pages)

8. **Private market-rate owned and rented housing** (Tuesday, October 1) *(Required field trip to Cambridge Housing Authority 9:00-10:30am)*


Recommended:

**Boston**


**Other U.S.**


**International**

9. **Private subsidized housing** (Thursday, October 3)
Katherine M. O'Regan & Keren M. Horn (2013) What Can We Learn About the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program by Looking at the Tenants?, Housing Policy Debate, 23:3, 597-613. (17 pages)

*Recommended:*

**Boston**
Citizens Housing and Planning Association. 2014. *CHAPA Summary on State Housing and Community Development Policy*.

**Other U.S.**

**International**

10. **Financing and Building Private Subsidized Housing** (Tuesday, October 8)
*(Required field trip to Madison Park CDC 9:00-10:30am)*

**Boston**


**Other U.S.**


11. State, Local, and Private Affordability Mechanism (Thursday, October 10)

**Social Housing**


**Inclusionary zoning**


**Rent Regulation**


**Community Land Trusts**


**Recommended:**

**Boston**


16

Other U.S.

International

**No class on Tuesday, October 15, because of a public holiday.**

12. Gentrification (Thursday, October 17) (Lisa Owens)
Albee, Allison, Rebecca Johnson, and Jeffrey Lubell. 2015. “Preserving, Protecting, and Expanding Affordable Housing: A Policy Toolkit for Public Health.” ChangeLab Solutions. Read pp. 18-55. (47 pages)
Recommended:

**Boston**


**Other U.S.**


**International**


---

**13. Public housing** (Tuesday, October 22) (Larry Vale) (Optional field trip to Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative 2:00-6:00pm)

Vale, Lawrence J. (video lecture) “Public Housing in the United States: Public Housing, Neighborhood Renewal and the Poor (or, Some Things to Think About Before Thinking About ‘Mixed-Income’ Housing).”


---

18

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Choice Neighborhoods program webpage. (see link on Stellar)


Recommended:

Boston


Other U.S.


International


Part IV: Community Economic Development

14. Job Quality and Upgrading (Thursday, October 24) (Paul Osterman)


Recommended:

**Boston**

**Other U.S.**

**15. Community and Economic Development**– (Tuesday, October 29)

**Other Resources:**

**16. Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development** (Thursday, October 31)


City of Boston. 2016. City of Boston Small Business Plan. (69 pages)

Explore (see guidance below) the nation’s major small business portal operated by the Small Business Administration: [www.smallbusiness.gov](http://www.smallbusiness.gov)

**Recommended:**

Other U.S.


International


### 17. Economic Equity and Inclusion (Tuesday, November 5) (Karilyn Crockett)


**Recommended:**

Boston


**Other U.S.**


**International**


18. **Solidarity Economies** (Thursday, November 7) *(Aaron Tanaka and Nia Evans)*


*Recommended:*

**Boston**

Loh, Penn and Boone Shear. 2015. “Solidarity Economy and Community Development: Emerging Cases in Three Massachusetts Cities.” *Community Development* 46: 1-17. (17 pages)

**Other U.S.**


**International**

Part V: Local Governments, Housing, Neighborhoods, Land Use

19. Neighborhood Effects, Municipal Fragmentation, Local Government Law, Land Use Controls (Tuesday, November 12)


Recommended:

Boston

Boston City Charter. Read pages 4-12; skim 19-28 and 32-37. (25 pages)


Other U.S.


20. **Scale** (Thursday, November 14)

Recommended:
Boston
Massachusetts Home Rule Amendment, Article LXXXIX. https://www.mma.org/sites/default/files/resources/article89_0.pdf

Other U.S.

International

21. **Segregation, Exclusionary Zoning, and Fair Housing** (Tuesday, November 19)

**Recommended:**

**Boston**
Metropolitan Area Planning Council. 2014. *Fair Housing and Equity Assessment for Metropolitan Boston.*

**Other U.S.**
Greene, Solomon and Kathy Pettit. 2016. “What If Cities Used Data to Drive Inclusive Neighborhood Change?” *Urban Institute.* (11 pages)
Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing, 80 *Federal Register* 42272 (July 16, 2015). Skim pages 42, 348-42, 371 only. (23 pages)
*Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs v. The Inclusive Communities Project,* 13-1371.

**Part VI: Conclusion**

22. **Bringing the State Back In** (Thursday, November 21)

**Recommended:**
Other US

International

**PROJECT OF CHANGE: The final research paper or project of change proposal is due Monday, November 25, at 5:00pm.**

23. **Collective Action** (Tuesday, November 26)

**Recommended:**

Other U.S.

International
24. Student presentations (Tuesday, December 3) (Optional film screening of “Palante Siempre Palante” 5:30pm)

25. Student presentations (Thursday, December 5)

26. Student presentations (Tuesday, December 10)