Course Description and Objectives:
While many want to improve housing and land use situations, this class posits that the core problem underlying these and many other urban issues is property rights.

This class elaborates this insight through reviewing the different conceptualizations of the city and urban space as framed by the fields of law, economics, sociology, critical theory, and urban planning. Students will gain an understanding of the possibilities with and limitations of disciplinary frameworks as well as the history of international urban development policies and projects. Students will also consider how the social sciences might be informed by the fields of design, cartography, and visual studies and their approaches to urban space. The class then explores case studies of innovative property rights strategies that have been used to increase economic growth and social justice so that students may gain insights for possible design and policy interventions in the future. This year’s topics include land trusts for affordable housing, alternative public space, land titling and regularization, placemaking, and critical cartography. The class offers a comparative viewpoint of land and housing issues by comparing contexts in US and Global South cities that face similar historic pressures of rapid urbanization.

Course text:
The course readings are available on the class website. The readings are separated into those that are required for the day’s session and some optional readings for those who would like to read more.

Assignments and Grading:
Course grades will be calculated according to the following weights:

- Reading responses: 40%
- Class Participation: 20%
- Final paper or project: 40%

Reading responses and class participation
Since this is a graduate seminar course, it is essential for students to read the material assigned each week and to participate in the discussions in the seminar. Students should read all the required readings and pick one optional reading for the week. The readings with * are more theoretical and may be of particular interest to doctoral students.

In order to promote reflection and substantive discussion, students are required to write a post to the class on the forum section of the class website about what they have read. Each student should identify in their post which optional reading they read. These will be DUE on the Monday 6PM before the class meets so that everyone can read each other’s responses before class.

The reading responses constitute a significant portion of the course grade. These responses should be fairly brief, approximately two paragraphs long. However, they should be thoughtful and raise at least one question you had as a result of the readings. I have provided discussion questions in this syllabus for each class session in order to help guide students in the reading. But, you need not answer these questions in your reading responses.

**Final Assignment Options:**

Students may opt to either write a final paper OR produce a critical map with an accompanying shorter writeup.

Students will present their final assignment at the final class sessions.

1. **Final Paper: 15-20 double-spaced pages**

   The purpose of the final paper is to allow the student to investigate a class topic area more deeply or a particular strand of literature not already explored in class. This assignment is meant to serve the student’s interests and to develop their critical thinking on a topic. Students may use this assignment in preparation for thesis work or to pursue a question of personal interest. However, the topic must be chosen in consultation with the professor in order to increase fruitfulness and feasibility. Below are two suggested approaches to the final paper.

   a) One approach would be to utilize the property rights theories explored in the course to analyze a real world situation in a specific place and time (ex: Oregon occupation of federal land, Los Angeles street vending legalization, etc.). The paper could identify issues that a property rights framework is helpful in illuminating and as well as identify aspects it does not address well in that particular case. Then, it could discuss potential implications for policy interventions more broadly, as well as what would need to be studied in order to assess the potentialities.

   b) You could document and critically appraise a policy initiative that attempted to address housing conditions through property rights strategies (ex: transferable development rights, land trusts, titling, etc.) in a specific time and place. Your paper should review the problems it was intended to address and the logic behind how it was supposed to solve them. It should also explain the political context in which the intervention was brought about. Then the student should give a critical appraisal of what happened or is happening in practice. Summarize the lessons learned and what you would suggest for further study.

Regardless of the approach taken for the final paper, your paper should survey no less than 10 scholarly articles, books, etc. It should contain the following sections:

1) Literature review: The literature that you select should address a question that you clearly identify. The literature review is not a book report. Although you will be relating information about prior research done by others, you should have your own story to tell: your own critical assessment of the ways that the issue has been framed and studied before. What do you disagree with or question in the literature? What is missing? Ideally, this process results in important questions yet to be answered or suggestions about how to find more rigorous or thorough answers.
2) Evidence: you should find available secondary data (qualitative and/or quantitative) about your question and case and analyze it. Again, this does not mean simply presenting published tables as facts but to critically question and interpret what it is saying, especially in regards to the literature you just reviewed.

3) Conclusion: you should present a brief proposal for further study including a well-honed research question and a possible study design.

2. Final Map Project
An alternative to the final paper is to produce a critical map, mapping what is usually not mapped. The maps should be of specific places and times and help viewers see important dynamics in a housing or land use situation they might not have been seen before. This option requires you to submit a visual document as well as accompanying text explaining what you did and what your intention was as well as presenting the project to the class during the last class meeting.

This option requires gathering data to map and then utilizing a visual system to represent the data. Please examine the readings in Section 7 in advance to help you develop your ideas for the project.


i) Accompanying Writeup: Explain what it is you mapped and why. Who is the intended viewer? Explain where you got the data (and how you got it if you generated it yourself) and any further analysis you did with the data. The most important issue to discuss is your critical appraisal of the limits of your data and your map: why did you choose the extent of the map that you did, what are you not showing and why, what are some of the biases of your data? 5-7 pages might be sufficient for this writeup.

ii) Map: please submit a pdf as well as a physical hard copy.
While you may meet with me about visual strategies and computer applications, I will not be providing any tutorials so this option is for students who either have some graphic skills or are willing to experiment and learn them.

3. Final Presentations
These will be scheduled to be presented during the final class sessions. Students will be given 10 minutes to present their final paper or map in the final portion of the class in order to have a discussion with their classmates that integrates the materials covered in the semester.

1) Let your first words be “The most surprising thing I found or learned from my final project is…”
A surprise means that it cannot be already well established in the literature. You can check with me beforehand about whether it has been. Or, your surprise could be a curious aspect of that conventional wisdom.

2) And then present only a few selected issues/slides that help us understand enough of the surprise/puzzle that we will discuss together. So, this means you will not include every map layer, any literature reviews, nor a descriptive overview of your project. At most, you should have only 2-3 ppt or pdf slides but it can often be more effective to not use any at all.

Deadlines and Dates

2/6: Upload a one page description of your proposed final paper or final map topic.
2/13: Upload a write-up (up to 2 pages) refining the topic and approach with a preliminary reference list.
2/20: Schedule a meeting with the professor for this week to discuss your final paper or project topic.
3/20: Due: An outline of the paper with an extended reference list or if you are doing a map project, a rough mockup of your map.
3/22-25 Mid-term grades based on reading responses will be given.
4/10-24 Final Presentations
4/24: Final paper or map project due.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:
Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Statement for Students with Disabilities
Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is 213-740-0776.

Support Systems:
Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255
Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/

Sexual Assault Resource Center
For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: http://sarc.usc.edu/

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX compliance – (213) 740-5086
Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. https://equity.usc.edu/

Bias Assessment Response and Support
Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/

Student Support & Advocacy – (213) 821-4710
Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/

Diversity at USC – https://diversity.usc.edu/
Tabs for Events, Programs and Training, Task Force (including representatives for each school), Chronology, Participate, Resources for Students
Overview of Course Topics:

SECTION 1: Theoretical lenses for how to understand space in the city

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<td>The Urban economics lens about land and housing</td>
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SECTION II: Property rights interventions mediating the struggle for space in the city

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<td>7</td>
<td>Land and Property Ownership Experiments: private, collective, public: ejidos</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Community Land Trusts: Redefining land ownership Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative case: a Community’s power of eminent domain</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Land titling and regularization</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>12-14</td>
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Course Content and Schedule:

SECTION 1: Current lenses on the phenomenon

Session 1
January 9
Rapid Urbanization and policymaking institutions;
Forty years of Re-framing a Housing Crisis

Discussion Questions:
What are the major trends that are happening in cities around the world? Is there anything significantly different about what’s happening now as compared to what’s happened for millennia in cities?

Explore the United Nations’ New Urban Agenda – what function does such a statement or institution serve relative to national governments, city governments, non-profits, businesses, civil society?

Required Reading:
Look at: http://www.theplaceswelive.com

And our video here:  http://slab.today/2016/11/habitat-3/


UN Habitat New Urban Agenda: https://habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda

Optional Reading:
Arthur Acolin and Annette M. Kim, “The policy implications of different techniques to identify urban growth patterns from satellite imagery: the example of informal construction in Ho Chi Minh City, 1994-2001,” working paper


Session 2
January 16
The Urban Economics Lens

Discussion Questions:
What drives urban land development and housing construction according to the urban economics
perspective?

Look around the Saigon South development website or another mega-project that you are interested in. What is being advertised as attractive to potential investors in these land development projects? Who are the players that are directly or implicitly participating in these projects? How might we understand their relationship to other members of society?

**Required reading:**


**Optional Reading:**


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**Session 3**
**January 23**  
**Political and Sociological Theory lenses about urban land and housing**

**Discussion Questions:**
How do Marxist and critical theory perspectives frame the main drivers of urban land development and housing conditions? Is the neo-Marxist view now outdated?

Read the report from HCMC’s People’s Committee, which is the city government. Compare the applicability of the urban economics frame from last week to the critical frame from this week.
**Required Reading:**
*Read this report in light of the Saigon South website we discussed last class:*
Hang, To Thi Thuy, et al. “Assessing the socio-economic and environmental impact of South Saigon urban development project and providing recommendations for redressing environmental and socio-economic consequences,” Ho Chi Minh City People’s Committee’s Institute for Economic Research. 1997.


http://www.slate.com/articles/business/metropolis/2016/03/an_interview_with_matthew_desmond_on_evicted_his_book_about_the_eviction.html
Also see Matthew Desmond’s “Evicted” website: http://evictedbook.com/videos


**Optional reading:**
http://nyti.ms/1QMFdb7


Session 4
January 30		Legal theory lens about property rights 1

**Discussion Questions:**
The previous class sessions have alluded to the importance of property rights. What exactly are property rights? Where do they come from? How can we create new ones?

How and why were Indians and colonists property rights systems so different?
**Required Reading:**
from Perspectives on Property Law, Ellickson et al. NY: Aspen publishers. 2002
Acheson, James M. “The Lobster Gangs of Maine”, pp.129-135


**Optional reading:**


*Locke, John. 1690. Second Treatise of Government, chapter 5. (one of the foundation readings on the philosophy behind private property rights)


**DUE 2/6:** Upload a one page description of your proposed final paper or final map topic.

**Session 5**  
**February 6**  
**Legal theory lens about property rights 2: Optimality and operationalizing property rights**

**Discussion Questions:**
Altering property rights have many powerful implications. How can we change property rights? What are some of the essential constraints on institutionalizing ideal property rights? What are some of the serious tradeoffs involved?

**Required Reading:**


Optional reading:


DUE 2/13: Upload a write-up (up to 2 pages) refining the topic and approach with a preliminary reference list.

Session 6
February 13 Land takings and compensation: how to make institutional change, social cognition

Discussion Questions:
Under what conditions can the state legitimately take property? What does it take to make institutional change towards equity?

Required Reading:


**Optional reading:**


**DUE 2/20:** Schedule a meeting with the professor for this week to discuss your final project/paper topic.

**SECTION 2: Property rights interventions mediating the struggle for space in the city**

Session 7
February 20

**Experiments in Land and Property Ownership:** public, private, collective

**Discussion Question:** What is the difference between public, private, and collective property? What has been the outcomes of housing system delivery under different ownership schemes?

**Required Reading:**


Optional reading:


http://www.justlanded.com/english/Mexico/Mexico-Guide/Property/Ejidos

Session 8
February 27

Community Land Trusts: Redefining land ownership

Guest speaker: Sandra McNeil, TRUST South LA

Discussion questions:
How can property rights be re-written to produce more affordable housing? How are community land trusts differently possible and challenging in the US versus in Kenya?
What does it take to change the property rules? Are the solutions scalable?

Required Reading:

Look around Trust South LA’s website: http://www.trustsouthla.org


Grounded Solutions Network, “What About Housing: a Policy Toolkit for Inclusive Growth”

Optional reading:

Land Titling and Slum Upgrading

Discussion questions:
What are the potential and limits of clarifying property rights through titling?
What about the long history of slum upgrading?

Required Reading:


Optional reading:


SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS MARCH 13

DUE 3/20: Due: An outline of the paper with an extended reference list or if you are doing a map project, a rough mockup of your map.

Session 10
March 20 Empirics and everyday urbanism: public space, street vending
Discussion Question:
How does urban land’s physicality and spatiality matter? Are the theories reviewed in the previous class sessions adequate to explain our current urban conditions? What exactly needs better explanations?

Required Reading:


Optional Reading:

Yasminah Beebeejaun (2016): Gender, urban space, and the right to everyday life, *Journal of Urban Affairs*


NO CLASS March 27: schedule individual office hours March 20-22 and other days.

Session 11
April 3  Critical cartography and the unmasking of spatial relations; SLAB research
Inscribing the City from Below: Community mapping

Discussion Question:
There is a long tradition of physical design strategies as a way to improve social conditions in urban planning history and current practices. In what ways is this problematic? Is visual representation part of the problem?
And in what ways might urban design practices and our methodologies be more transformative? What is the potential of socially engaged, community-based efforts to make a spatial claim in the city (such as asset-mapping, memorials, naming and signage of neighborhoods)?

**Required Reading:**

Kim, Annette M. *Sidewalk City: remapping the public and space in Ho Chi Minh City* 2013. chapter 3: "Looking Again: Power and Critical Cartography"


**Optional reading:**


**Session 12**
April 10  **Student Presentations and Integrative Discussion 1**

**Session 13**
April 17  ___________________________________________________________________________________________

Student Presentations and Integrative Discussion 2

Session 14
April 24  ___________________________________________________________________________________________

Student Presentations and Integrative Discussion 3
HOUSING AND LAND USE IN RAPIDLY URBANIZING REGIONS
Spring 2018

Informational Questionnaire:

Student Name: _________________________________________________________

Email: _______________________________________________________________

Phone number: _______________________________________________________________________

Nationality or other cultural background: ________________________________________________

Circle one:
Program: Planning Public Policy Public Administration Architecture Other _____________

Degree Program: Masters PhD other _____________

Year in the program: 1 2 3 4

What courses have you taken that provide background for this course?

Any relevant work experience?

Why are you interested in taking this course? What do you hope to learn?