

USC Price School of Public Policy

Spring 2020

PPD 431, Section 51135

Undergraduate Policy, Planning and Development Studio - *Housing Innovation*

Day/Time: Tuesdays, 6-9:20 PM
Location: Online
Instructor: Ashley Atkinson, MPA/MPL, AICP
Office: Online
Office Hours: Tuesdays 5-6 PM or by appointment
Contact Info: atkinson.ashley@gmail.com, 213-505-1631 (mobile)

Course Description

Los Angeles continues to face an unprecedented housing crisis. Renters in particular are affected, which threatens Los Angeles' legacy as a place of economic opportunity. Studies continue to find that when comparing wages to housing costs, Los Angeles is the most expensive of the nation's metropolitan regions. Housing costs and shortages are harming many residents and undermining our progress toward a more prosperous, equitable and sustainable region:

- Homelessness increased 50% in Los Angeles County from 2011 to 2019
- 60% of LA households are “rent burdened” – spending more than 30% of their income on housing. A third of residents spend more than half of their income on housing
- More than 20,000 rent stabilized apartments have been lost in LA City since 2001, with households evicted from most of these units.
- Families are forced to double up in overcrowded dwellings, and adults may face long commutes to their jobs from places where housing is more affordable
- The LA region has experienced a net loss of people, especially younger and low and moderate income residents, moving to lower-cost regions.
- This loss could accelerate; polls shows that 59 percent of voters in LA County have considered moving due to high housing costs and outmigration is increasing

The root of this problem is clear: there is not enough housing to keep up with demand. While that's a simple statement, there are many policy, economic, and cultural factors that contribute to this lack of supply. Many of the potential solutions are challenging to implement, and there is no “silver bullet” that will solve the housing crisis. In this class, we will focus on the potential for innovative housing typologies – i.e., built forms of housing that are unconventional (or illegal) in today's housing market – to help meet our housing needs and address the crisis. Innovative housing typologies include, but are not limited to:

- Micro-units and tiny homes
- Modular and pre-fabricated housing
- Temporary or portable housing
- Shipping containers or other unconventional materials
- Co-living or communal living units
- Housing without traditional features

In the context of exploring housing innovations, we will also examine: the roles that policy & regulations play in determining housing forms; the economics and financing of housing development & construction; how new housing interacts with existing communities and the impacts of design.

This studio will ask students to examine housing innovations from an interdisciplinary perspective, allowing you to apply your skills and knowledge to a real-world problem. Students will work in teams to complete a project; a reflection of the primary mode of work in the professions represented in the Price School of Public Policy.

We will be learning from and drawing inspiration from organizations working in innovative housing at the local level, including but not limited to:

- *Flyaway Homes* – a for-profit provider of housing for the homeless that built Los Angeles' first multi-family housing project constructed with shipping containers
- *PodShare* – a startup creating inexpensive co-living spaces targeted at social travelers and mobile workers
- *LA-Más* – a non-profit community design firm that has produced an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) pilot project and program
- *CRATE Modular* – The leading manufacturer of container-based multi-unit housing
- *Building Blocks* - An entrepreneurial ADU builder inspired by policy change

With these experts in the day-to-day realities of building innovation as our models, we will work toward an understanding of how policy and regulation impact what housing is produced on the ground, and explore the potential for practical, scalable innovations that could help solve the housing crisis.

Learning Objectives

PPD 431 is a studio course, designed to be project based, experiential learning, and integrative across multiple tracks. You will work in groups toward collaborative learning and we will focus on applying your knowledge to real-world clients, places and projects. In addition to in-class activities, we will try to undertake one or more field trips or site visits.

Our activities will provide an understanding of principles of planning, policy, and development, focused on innovative or unconventional housing typologies in light of the housing crisis. The course covers fundamental concepts as well as criteria for evaluating policy and development decisions, from the perspectives of both builders and policy makers. At the conclusion of this course, students should have an understanding of:

- The critical role that housing availability and affordability plays in economic development, public health, and quality of life.
- The influence of planning policies, building codes, and legislation on the availability of different housing typologies.
- The need for various types of housing in light of the current regional and national housing crisis.
- The potential for, and challenges of, innovation in housing practices.
- Evaluation of housing policies based on impact to the built environment.
- Basics of site planning, design, financing and development feasibility analysis.

Course Assignments

In-Class Presentations (10%)

Students will be asked to independently select a current news story (text or audio/video) about housing and make a 5-minute, 5-slide presentation of the information in the story to their peers. The article must have been published by a verified media source within the last 12 months. Students should conduct additional research as needed to fully understand the information presented and adequately inform their peers on the topic. Presenters should prepare to take questions from the instructor and fellow students. Grades will be based on thoroughness of preparation, clarity of presentation, and ability to discuss the material presented.

Short Assignments (10%)

Students will be asked to independently complete two short assignments that will ask them to reflect on housing issues, analyze a policy/practice, or perform research. Topics and response formats will be announced at least one week prior to the due date.

Mid-Term Research Project (30%)

Students will independently complete a mid-term research project that results in a professional-quality “white paper” report, and presentation. The project will ask students to analyze a recent or historic change in policy, regulation, or building practice that encouraged

housing production; or 2) A recent or historic development project that represented an innovation in housing. The white paper should be 7-8 pages in length, due March 6, and will be accompanied by a 5-minute semi-formal presentation on March 3 or 10.

Final Project (40%)

Students will participate in a group capstone project that culminates in a final report and presentation. The project will ask student teams to either 1) propose an innovative change in policy, regulation or practice that would encourage housing production and analyze the potential impact of such a change on a neighborhood or community; or 2) Produce a preliminary development proposal that illustrates the potential of an innovative housing typology on a specific site and analyze the potential impact of this typology on a neighborhood or community. Students will be asked to identify roles on each team that align with their individual interests & degree programs. The final project should be 3,000-4,000 words (12-16 pages in length), due May 12, and will be accompanied by a 10-15-minute formal presentation on April 21 or 28.

Grades & Expectations

The focus of the class will be the preparation of the mid-term and final projects, as these are examples of the type of professional analyses and presentations required in policy, planning, and related professions. Students are also expected to attend each class and have completed required readings prior to class so that they can contribute to in-class discussions. Assignments will be weighted as follows:

- In-class participation: 10%
- In-class presentation: 10%
- Short assignments: 10%
- Mid-term project: 30%
- Final project: 40%

Grades will be allocated according to the scale below.

- A – Work of excellent quality exceeding requirements and expectations
- B – Work of good quality meeting requirements and expectations
- C – Work of fair quality not meeting either requirements or expectations
- D – Work of minimum passing quality, meeting neither requirements nor expectations
- F – Failure to regularly attend class or adequately complete coursework

To receive an “A” grade, work must:

- Be submitted on time
- Address all aspects of the assignment thoroughly
- Demonstrate critical and creative thinking
- Reflect thoughtful research and analysis
- Be written/presented clearly and professionally

Attendance & Participation

As a record of active participation and attendance, the instructor may require the completion of in-class quizzes or work products individually or in teams. In-class work may be assigned at any point during the class; students who miss the assignment due to arriving late or leaving early will not have an opportunity to make up the work. Students with excused absences will be given credit for participation, but may be asked to make up in-class exercises. To receive an excused absence, students must contact the professor within 24 hours of an absence with documentation for the reason for the absence. Absences will be excused at the instructor's discretion. To receive full credit for participation, students must consistently and thoughtfully contribute to class discussions.

In-Class Devices

Students are encouraged to use their personal devices for academic purposes during class. Academic purposes include looking up terms, doing research, and completing in-class assignments. The instructor will provide at least 24-hour notice to students if they will need to bring devices to class in order to complete in-class assignments. Students who require a laptop

to complete in-class work can check one out through the Laptop Loaner Program <https://itservices.usc.edu/spaces/laptoploaner/>.

Late Assignments

Assignments are due no later than 11:59 PM on the date indicated, and should be submitted via Blackboard, unless otherwise specified. Unless due to an emergency situation excused by the instructor, late work will be penalized by a one-step deduction in the assignment grade for every 24 hours late, or portion thereof (i.e. A to A-). Unexcused late work will not be accepted more than 96 hours past the due date. Contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss alternate arrangements due to an emergency.

Course Schedule

Topics and assignments are subject to change based on progress, student needs, and availability of guest speakers. Revisions will be posted on Blackboard as needed.

| Week | Topic | Assignments Due |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| Week 1 January 14 | Welcome and introduction Purpose and format of class Introduction to class concepts & the housing crisis | N/A |
| Week 2 January 21 | History of housing regulation State of the nation's housing | Read Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies |
| Week 3 January 28 | CLASS CANCELLED | CLASS CANCELLED |
| Week 4 February 4 | Planning & building practices in California Policy impacts on housing production | Read California Department of Housing & Community Development Read Mawhorter & Reid |
| Week 5 February 11 | Policy impacts on housing cost & finance | Short Assignment #1 Due Read and explore " The Cost of Affordable Housing " Read Schuetz |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| <p>Week 6 February 18</p> | <p>Policy impacts on housing form</p> <p>Guest Presentation: Jason Neville, Building Blocks</p> | <p>Initial mid-term topic selections due</p> <p>Read Fox</p> <p>Read Cuff (1 of 2), read Cuff (2 of 2)</p> |
| <p>Week 7 February 25</p> | <p>Essentials of site design</p> <p>Guest Presentations: Mark Vallianatos, Office of Innovation, LA Metro</p> <p>Linda Reyes, LA-Más</p> | <p>Read Vallianatos</p> <p>Read Peters</p> |
| <p>Week 8 March 3</p> | <p>Mid-term presentations</p> <p>Guest Presentation: Jennifer Kim, Office of Mayor Eric Garcetti</p> | <p>Mid-term reports due Friday, March 6</p> |
| <p>Week 9 March 10</p> | <p>Mid-term presentations</p> <p>Guest Presentation: Kevin Hirai, Flyaway Homes</p> | <p>Teams form for final project</p> <p>Read Hassell, Preface & Chapters 1-4</p> |
| <p>Week 10 March 17</p> | <p>NO CLASS - Spring Break</p> | <p>None</p> |
| <p>Week 11 March 24</p> | <p>Review of key concepts & introduce final project</p> <p>Guest Presentation: Amanda Gattenby, CRATE Modular</p> | <p>Read Galante</p> <p>Read Dillon</p> <p>Teams form for final project</p> |
| | | |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| <p>Week 12 March 31</p> | <p>Housing in context – processes & communities</p> <p>Guest Presentation: Ben Winter, California Community Foundation</p> | <p>Short Assignment #2 Due</p> <p>Read Najarian</p> <p>Read Zahniser #1 and Zahniser #2</p> <p>Final project check-in #1 (Initial project topic & site selections)</p> |
| <p>Week 13 April 7</p> | <p>The past, present & future of housing innovation</p> <p>Guest Presentation: Elvina Beck, PodShare</p> | <p>Reading TBD</p> <p>Final project check-in #2</p> |
| <p>Week 14 April 14</p> | <p>Materials & practices worldwide</p> | <p>Reading TBD</p> <p>Final project check-in #3</p> |
| <p>Week 15 April 21</p> | <p>Final project presentations</p> | <p>Final Project Presentation Files Due - 6 PM via Blackboard</p> |
| <p>Week 16 April 28</p> | <p>Final project presentations</p> | <p>Final Project Presentation Files Due - 6 PM via Blackboard</p> |
| <p>Week 17 May 5</p> | <p>NO CLASS - Study Day</p> | <p>None</p> |
| <p>Week 18 May 12</p> | <p>EXAM DAY</p> <p>Wrap-up and closing concepts</p> | <p>Final Project Report Due via Blackboard</p> |

Required Readings

There is no required book for this course. Other readings will be made available in PDF format on <http://blackboard.usc.edu>, and at the links indicated below.

- California Department of Housing & Community Development. (2018, February). *California's Housing Future: Challenges and Opportunities*. Retrieved from: http://www.hcd.ca.gov/policy-research/plans-reports/docs/SHA_MainDoc_2_15_Final.pdf
- Cuff, D. and Blumenfeld, J. (2017, summer). *Building an ADU: Guidebook to Accessory Dwelling Units in the City of Los Angeles*. Retrieved from: <https://citylab.ucla.edu/adu-guidebook/>
- Cuff, D., Higgins, T., and Dahl, P., editors. (2010). *Backyard Homes LA*. Retrieved from: https://citylab.ucla.edu/s/2010_Backyard_Homes.pdf
- Fox, J. (2019, February 13). *Why America's New Apartment Buildings All Look the Same*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2019-02-13/why-america-s-new-apartment-buildings-all-look-the-same>
- Galante, C. et. al. (2017, March). *Building Affordability by Building Affordably*. Retrieved from: http://turnercenter.berkeley.edu/uploads/offsite_construction.pdf
- Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies. *State of the Nation's Housing 2019*. Retrieved from: https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Harvard_JCHS_State_of_the_Nation_s_Housing_2019.pdf
- Hassell, S., et al. *Building Better Homes: Government Strategies for Promoting Innovation in Housing*. Santa Monica: RAND, 2003. Retrieved from: https://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1658.html
- Mawhorter, S., and Reid, C. *Local Housing Policies Across California*. (December 2018). Retrieved from: http://californialanduse.org/download/Terner_California_Residential_Land_Use_Survey_Report.pdf
- Peters, A. (2018, April 9). *Los Angeles' Bold Plan to Pack Its Backyards with More Housing*. Retrieved from <https://www.fastcompany.com/40547826/los-angeles-bold-plan-to-pack-its-backyards-with-more-housing>
- Schuetz, Jenny. (2020, January 17). *Who's to Blame for High Housing Costs? It's more Complicated Than You Think*. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/research/whos-to-blame-for-high-housing-costs-its-more-complicated-than-you-think>
- Vallianatos, M. (2017, September 6). *Forbidden City: How Los Angeles Banned Some of its Most Popular Buildings*. Retrieved from

<https://urbanize.la/post/forbidden-city-how-los-angeles-banned-some-its-most-popular-buildings>

Course Continuity in Case of an Emergency

If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information <http://emergency.usc.edu> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

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” 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, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “o” after hours – 24/7 on call studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) - (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298
equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298
usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776 dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710 campusupport.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101 diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC) ombuds.usc.edu

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.