

USC Price School of Public Policy

Spring 2021

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:	Mondays 6-8 PM (email for an appointment)
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Course Description

The Los Angeles region 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 by 70% in Los Angeles County over the last decade
- 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 moving to lower-cost regions.
- This loss may accelerate; polls shows that 59 percent of voters in LA County have considered moving due to high housing costs and outmigration is increasing
- Pandemic-related unemployment is projected to worsen homelessness through 2023

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

In the context of exploring housing innovations, we will also examine: the roles that land use policies & building 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. While our focus will be on the Los Angeles region and California, we will draw inspiration and instruction from around the country and the world.

This studio will ask students to examine housing innovations from an interdisciplinary perspective, allowing you to apply the skills and knowledge of your degree program to a real-world problem. Students will complete a project working in teams, 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 financing program
- *CRATE Modular* – The leading manufacturer of container-based multi-unit housing in California
- *Building Blocks* - An entrepreneurial small-scale 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 for project-based, experiential learning integrated across tracks. You will work in groups toward collaborative learning and we will focus on applying your knowledge to real-world problems, places, and projects. In addition to in-class activities, you will be learning from housing-focused webinars intended for a professional audience.

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 evaluation and feasibility analysis, using the City of Los Angeles as an example.

Course Assignments

Class Participation (10%)

As PPD431 is a studio course, active participation, dialogue, and collaboration are required to meet our learning goals. To receive full credit for participation, students must consistently and thoughtfully contribute to class discussions, and engage with presenters. On occasion, synchronous class time may be substituted with housing-related webinars intended for professional audiences. Students will be expected to view webinars on their own schedules and may be asked to verify participation by providing proof of registration and/or a summary report.

Innovation Presentation (10%)

Students will be asked to independently select a current news story (text or audio/video) about a housing innovation *outside the Los Angeles region* and make a 5-minute, 5-slide presentation of the information to their peers. The story must have been published by an authentic 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, worth 5% each, 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”-style 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 9, and will be accompanied by a 5 to 10 minute semi-formal presentation on March 9.

Innovation Challenge (Final Project - 40%)

Students will spend the second half of the semester in a group project that culminates in a final report and presentation. The project is designed as an “innovation challenge” and asks 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 implementation of an innovative housing typology on a specific site and analyzes the potential impact of this typology on a neighborhood or community. Students will self-identify projects and roles that align with their individual interests and degree programs. The final report should be 3,000-4,000 words (12-16 pages in length), due May 11, and will be accompanied by a 10-15-minute formal presentation on April 20 or 27. The project will be introduced in more detail on March 11 or 16.

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 have completed required readings prior to class so that they can contribute to in-class discussions. Assignments will be weighted as follows:

- Class participation: 10%
- Innovation presentation: 10%
- Short assignments: 10%
- Mid-term project: 30% (including presentation)
- Innovation Challenge (final project): 40% (including presentation)

Extra credit opportunities may occasionally be offered. Each student may earn up to 3 total points on their final grade (a one-step upgrade, i.e. from A- to A) by taking advantage of extra credit opportunities.

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 & Reasonable Learning Hours

Students are expected to participate in synchronous online sessions whenever possible, but may miss up to two regular sessions for any reason without incurring a penalty. This does not apply to sessions during which students are scheduled to give presentations. Presentations will not be rescheduled without documentation of illness or an emergency. Students who are absent from more than two regular sessions will be asked to consult with the instructor. Additional absences will be excused at the instructor's discretion.

Special accommodations will be made for students for whom the class time falls outside reasonable learning hours, defined as 7 am to 10 pm in the student's time zone.

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 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. Extensions requested less than 24 hours prior to the due date/time will not be granted except in case of emergency.

Course Schedule

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

Week	Topic	Assignments Due
Week 1 January 19	Welcome and introductions Course purpose, format, & expectations Introduction to core concepts	N/A
Week 2 January 26	History of housing regulation The state of housing in the US & California <i>Guest Presentation:</i> Charly Ligety, Housing Innovation Collaborative <i>Innovation Presentations:</i> Wall, Andrew Welling, Justin	Read Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies Read California Department of Housing & Community Development
Week 3 February 2	Policy impacts on housing form <i>Guest Presentation:</i> Mark Vallianatos, LA Metro & Abundant Housing LA <i>Innovation Presentations:</i> Vazquez, Christine Wadsworth, Samuel Abecassis, Joel	Read Vallianatos Read Fox

<p>Week 4 February 9</p>	<p>Policy impacts on housing affordability</p> <p><i>Guest Presentation:</i> Jason Neville, Building Blocks</p> <p><i>Innovation Presentations:</i> Tang, Tonya Turner, Lily Allo, McNeil</p>	<p>Short Assignment #1 Due - 11:59 PM via Blackboard</p> <p>Read and explore “The Cost of Affordable Housing”</p> <p>Read Schuetz</p>
<p>Week 5 February 16</p>	<p>Density & the essentials of site design</p> <p><i>Innovation Focus: Accessory Dwelling Units & Micro-Units</i></p> <p><i>Guest Presentation:</i> Helen Leung, LA-Más</p> <p><i>Innovation Presentations:</i> Saucedo, Steven Baresi, Eduardo</p>	<p>Initial mid-term topic selections due - check in via office hours, email, or after class by 11:59 PM</p> <p>Read Cuff (1 of 2), read Cuff (2 of 2)</p> <p>Read Peters</p> <p>Read Phillips</p>
<p>Week 6 February 23</p>	<p>Policy impacts on housing production</p> <p><i>Innovation Focus: Co-Living</i></p> <p><i>Guest Presentation:</i> Elvina Beck, Podshare</p> <p><i>Innovation Presentations:</i> Meier, Jeremiah Pfeifer, Douglas</p>	<p>Read Mawhorter & Reid</p>
<p>Week 7 March 2</p>	<p>Building regulations & practices</p> <p><i>Innovation focus: Modular Housing</i></p>	<p>Read Galante</p>

	<p><i>Guest Presentation:</i> Amanda Gattenby, CRATE Modular</p> <p><i>Innovation Presentations:</i> Lee, Erica Mayer, Cooper Rheinschild, Sage</p>	
<p>Week 8 March 9</p>	Mid-term presentations	Mid-term reports due - 11:59 PM via Blackboard
<p>Week 9 March 16</p>	<p>Review key concepts</p> <p>Introduce Innovation Challenge</p> <p><i>Guest Presentation:</i> Jennifer Kim, Office of Mayor Eric Garcetti</p> <p><i>Innovation Presentations:</i> Hastings, Johnny Klatte, Trenton</p>	<p>Teams form for final project</p> <p>Reading TBA</p>
<p>Week 10 March 23</p>	NO CLASS - Wellness Day	None
<p>Week 11 March 30</p>	<p>Process innovation & the nature of change</p> <p><i>Guest Presentation:</i> Kevin Hirai, Flyaway Homes</p> <p><i>Innovation Presentations:</i> Giannini, Annabella Gosen, Cristina</p>	<p>Final project check-in #1 - Topic & site selections due</p> <p>Reading TBA</p>
<p>Week 12</p>		

April 6	<p>Housing in the context of communities</p> <p><i>Guest Presentation:</i> Jason Lopata, LBPM Property Management</p> <p><i>Innovation Presentations:</i> Espinoza, Abisai Garcia, Jesse</p>	<p>Short Assignment #2 Due - 11:59 PM via Blackboard</p> <p>Reading TBA</p>
<p>Week 13 April 13</p>	<p>Materials & practices worldwide</p> <p><i>Guest Presentation:</i> Cade Stephens, California Earth Institute</p> <p><i>Innovation Presentations:</i> Cortese, Jack Ding, Yang</p>	<p>Final project check-in #2 - Outline Due</p> <p>Reading TBA</p>
<p>Week 14 April 20</p>	<p>The past, present & future of housing innovation</p> <p><i>Guest Presentation:</i> Audrey Handelman, Gensler</p> <p><i>Innovation Presentations:</i> Bolour, Michael Brown, Jared</p>	<p>Read Gensler</p>
<p>Week 15 April 27</p>	<p>Innovation Challenge Presentations</p>	<p>Final Project Presentations Due - Submit by 11:59 PM via Blackboard</p>
<p>Week 16 May 4</p>	<p>NO CLASS - Study Day</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Week 17 May 11</p>	<p>“Exam” Day - 7-9 PM Wrap-up and closing concepts</p>	<p>Final Project Report Due - 7 PM 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 2020*. Retrieved from: https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/reports/files/Harvard_JCHS_The_State_of_the_Nations_Housing_2020_Report_Revised_120720.pdf
- 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>
- Phillips, S. et. al. (2018, March). *Micro-Units in DTLA*. Retrieved from https://www.ccala.org/clientuploads/directory/whitepapers/CCA_Micro_Unit_White_Paper_-_March_2018.pdf
- 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>

Class Recording Policy

All classes will be recorded for asynchronous viewing with transcriptions made available. These recordings may not be distributed or used outside class in any way without the instructor's permission. Students are not permitted to create their own class recordings without the instructor's permission. Violations will be met with the appropriate disciplinary sanction.

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](http://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.symplcity.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 campussupport.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.