

Topics in Public Policy and Urban Studies

Urban land management and housing outcomes: a global perspective

USC Price School of Public Policy

PPD 400; Fall 2024

4 units
Lec 51131R

Tuesdays &
Thursdays

12:00pm – 1:50pm

RGL 215



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Office hours:
Fridays 8:30 – 10am
or by appointment

Introduction

Urban land is scarce. Aside from some scattered sea-dwellers, the totality of the world's population of almost 8 billion people resides on the 29.2 percent of the earth's surface that is land. This yields an average terrestrial population density of just over 53 persons per square kilometer. For the 1.34% of the earth's total land area that is urban, however, that figure is 1,713 persons per square kilometer. Evidently, urban land is at a premium. How can we accommodate everyone? Where will they live, and under what circumstances? What is the role of markets for land and for housing? What is the role of urban planning? Or of urban infrastructure policy?

Those are some of the fundamental questions we explore in this course.

We do so from a global perspective, which allows us to draw lessons from the vast variety of urban land management practices and circumstances that our world has to offer.

Working in small teams, each of you will produce a video documentary (video policy essay) that examines such issues using a case study of some urbanized region in the United States or abroad. That single pursuit will be the mainstay of this course from beginning to end. The many readings, lectures, discussions, assignments, exams and workshops are all intended to support that quest.

Source: Wikipedia	Surface area	Population
Urban land	2 million km²	3,426 million
Other land	147 million km²	4,523 million
Water	361 million km²	--
Earth	510 million km²	7,949 million

Learning objectives

The core topical and analytical substance of this course pertains to urban land management policies. Not only will you be expected to demonstrate your understanding of this body of scholarly knowledge and professional practice, you should also be able to explain this clearly to others using a range of verbal, written and video presentations.

More specifically, by the end of the semester you should be able to:

- ✚ Explain what the key determinants are of urban land prices, including geographic variations thereof.
- ✚ Outline the contributing elements of housing prices, including their relationship to urban land.
- ✚ Compare and evaluate alternative policies for promoting housing affordability.
- ✚ Assess the potential of transportation and other infrastructure policies for improving housing affordability in urban areas.
- ✚ Show how these topics interact with climate change issues at an urban scale.
- ✚ Provide a broad overview of how and why cities around the world differ with respect to their housing and land use outcomes.
- ✚ Give a more detailed account of these issues in at least one major urban area in the U.S. or abroad.
- ✚ Work with others to apply your newly acquired video production skills to create an informative case study documentary.

Earning your grade

In an important sense, this course is all about *one central objective*, which is for you (as part of a team effort) to produce a comprehensive policy video on a case study of your choice. Everything else we do in this course (lectures, readings, assignments, exams) is designed to help you achieve that end.

Team work (40%)

1. **Policy video – first draft (15%)** – Working in small groups, you will produce a video documentary (8-minute maximum) of a case study of your choosing. Think of this as a group term paper / policy essay delivered via video production. We will discuss this in much greater detail in class. Note that the first draft is weighted more heavily than the final draft, so you should strive to produce a highly polished first draft.
2. **Policy video – final draft (10%)** – Each team will receive constructive feedback on the first draft of the policy video. The changes you make to your first draft should respond earnestly to that feedback. In the context of scholarly work, this is akin to a “revise and resubmit” decision by the editor.
3. **Storyboard (10%)** – In video production, a storyboard is an intermediate product that anticipates the form and content of your video essay. For our purposes, you can use

PowerPoint or some similar tool to produce this. The earlier you can pull a good storyboard together, the more time you'll have to work on the actual production.

4. **Annotated reading list (5%)** – The substantive content of your video essay is of paramount importance. This bears directly on your understanding of the subject matter that you are presenting for your case study. Your annotated reading list is the most tangible evidence of your ability to draw on relevant scholarly and professional expertise in shaping your own narrative. This is worth 15% of your grade: 5% as part of a team grade and 10% as part of your individual effort.

Individual work (60%)

5. **Annotated reading list (10%)** – See **Annotated reading list** above.
6. **Constructive critiques (10%)** – You are asked to write short, but thoughtful and constructive, critiques of each of the other teams' first draft videos. These should address both the substantive content and production aspects.
7. **Current event synopses (2x5%)** – These short assignments are designed to help connect our class work with current events. The emphasis will be on how the course materials can help us understand the world around us – and vice versa.
8. **Midterm exam (10%)** – An in-class, open-book midterm exam will be tightly tied to the course readings to ensure that you are duly rewarded for your astute and penetrating understanding thereof.
9. **Final exam (10%)** – The final exam will be comparable to the midterm exam, but will cover material for the entire semester.
10. **Class participation (10%)** – This grade will be based on my assessment, and those of your teammates, of how your class contributions helped your peers to do well in the class.

Schedule of topics

Wk	Date -- >	Tuesdays [a]	Thursdays [b]	<--Date
1	27-Aug	Course overview; self introductions	Urban land	29-Aug
2	03-Sep	Urban housing	Urban transportation	05-Sep
3	10-Sep	Urban structure	<i>Team workshops</i> <i>- select case study, video production</i>	12-Sep
4	17-Sep	Urban typologies <i>1st current event synopsis due</i>	Case study: Kanpur, India Case study: Jinan, China	19-Sep
5	24-Sep	Case study: Cirebon, Indonesia Case study: Buenos Aires, Argentina	<i>Team workshop</i> <i>- preliminary reading list due</i>	26-Sep
6	01-Oct	Case study: Accra, Ghana Case study: Cleveland, Ohio	Midterm exam preview <i>Team workshop</i>	03-Oct
7	08-Oct	<i>Midterm exam</i>	<i>Fall recess (no class)</i>	10-Oct
8	15-Oct	<i>2nd current event synopsis due</i>	Guest speaker (SCAG or City of LA)	17-Oct
9	22-Oct	<i>Working groups – story boards</i> <i>Team reading notes due</i>	Urban infrastructure	24-Oct
10	29-Oct	Cities and climate change	Municipal “clubs”	31-Oct
11	05-Nov	Comparative urbanism <i>Annotated reading lists due</i>	Guest speaker (World Bank or LILP)	07-Nov
12	12-Nov	<i>Special arrangements, TBA</i> <i>(I will be at a conference this week)</i>	<i>Special arrangements, TBA</i> <i>(I will be at a conference this week)</i>	14-Nov
13	19-Nov	<i>Draft video presentations</i> Feedback sessions	<i>Draft video presentations</i> Feedback sessions	21-Nov
14	26-Nov	Final exam preview <i>Team workshop – revise videos</i>	Thanksgiving (no class)	28-Nov
15	03-Dec	<i>Final video presentations</i> Invited guest panel discussions	<i>Final video presentations</i> Invited guest panel discussions	05-Dec
F		<i>Final exam</i>		

Course readings

The principal readings for this course are so new that you all will be amongst the very first to see them. In fact, they are both not due to be published until early next year:

Goytia, C. and Heikkila, E. (2025), *Urban land management and housing outcomes: A global perspective*, Routledge, forthcoming.

Goytia, C. and Heikkila, E. (2025), *Policy Focus Report*, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, forthcoming.

My co-author is Professor Cynthia Goytia at the University of Torcuata di Tella in Buenos Aires, and this work is the culmination of what has thus far been an eight-year collaboration on related topics and projects. It is exciting for me to share this work with all of you.

The calendar of topics and activities outlined above is intended as a general overview. As we may be making some adjustments to the precise order and timing of the topics we cover, the principal readings are indicated here with reference to topics, rather than dates.

Video documentaries

Aufderheide, Patricia (2007), *Documentary film: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press.

Urban land

Heikkila, E. J., & Harten, J. G. (2023). Can Land Use Regulation Be Smarter? Planners' Role in the Informal Housing Challenge. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 43(2), 359-370.

Heikkila, Eric (2000), "The Economics of Land Use Zoning", chapter 2 in *The Economics of Planning*, CUPR Press, Center for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers University. (Video lecture also available).

Urban housing

Ellen, Ingrid Gould, Jeffrey Lubell, and Mark Willis (2021), "Through the roof: What communities can do about the high cost of rental housing in America", *Policy Focus Report*, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

Heikkila, Eric (2000), "The Economics of Housing", chapter 3 in *The Economics of Planning*, CUPR Press, Center for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers University. (Video lecture also available).

Urban transportation

Heikkila, Eric (2000), "The Economics of Traffic Congestion", chapter 6 in *The Economics of Planning*, CUPR Press, Center for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers University. (Video lecture also available).

Knowles, R. D., Ferbrache, F., & Nikitas, A. (2020). Transport's historical, contemporary and future role in shaping urban development: Re-evaluating transit oriented development. *Cities*, 99, 102607.

Thondoo, M., Marquet, O., Márquez, S., & Nieuwenhuijsen, M. J. (2020). Small cities, big needs: Urban transport planning in cities of developing countries. *Journal of Transport & Health*, 19, 100944.

Urban structure

Heikkila, Eric (2000), “The Economics of Urban Structure”, chapter 4 in *The Economics of Planning*, CUPR Press, Center for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers University. (Two video lectures also available).

Lieske, Scott, Donald McLeod, Roger Coupal and Sanjeev Srivastava (2012), “Determining the relationship between urban form and the costs of public services”, *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*, vol. 39, 155-173.

Urban typologies

Goytia, C. and Heikkila, E. (2025). Towards a dual typology of informal settlements and their urban contexts. Chapter 4, in *Urban land management and housing outcomes: A global perspective*. Routledge, forthcoming.

Goytia, C. and Heikkila, E. (2025). What can we learn from our case studies? Chapter 11, in *Urban land management and housing outcomes: A global perspective*. Routledge, forthcoming.

Case study – Kanpur, India

Goytia, C. and Heikkila, E. (2025). Kanpur, India. Chapter 5, in *Urban land management and housing outcomes: A global perspective*. Routledge, forthcoming.

Case study – Jinan, China

Goytia, C. and Heikkila, E. (2025). Jinan, China. Chapter 7, in *Urban land management and housing outcomes: A global perspective*. Routledge, forthcoming.

Case study – Cirebon, Indonesia

Goytia, C. and Heikkila, E. (2025). Cirebon, Indonesia. Chapter 10, in *Urban land management and housing outcomes: A global perspective*. Routledge, forthcoming.

Case study – Buenos Aires, Argentina

Goytia, C., Heikkila, E. J., & Pasquini, R. A. (2023). Do land use regulations help give rise to informal settlements? Evidence from Buenos Aires. *Land use policy*, 125, 106484.

Lens, Michael and Paavo Monkkonen (2016), "Do Strict Land Use Regulations Make Metropolitan Areas More Segregated by Income?", *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Winter.

Case study – Accra, Ghana

Goytia, C. and Heikkila, E. (2025). Accra, Ghana. Chapter 9, in *Urban land management and housing outcomes: A global perspective*. Routledge, forthcoming.

Grant, R. (2021). Urban studies of Accra. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*.

Venables, A. J. (2010). Economic geography and African development. *Papers in Regional Science*, 89(3), 469-484.

World Bank (2022). *Ghana - Country partnership framework for the period of FY22-FY26*

Case study – Cleveland, United States

Goytia, C. and Heikkila, E. (2025). Cleveland, United States. Chapter 8, in *Urban land management and housing outcomes: A global perspective*. Routledge, forthcoming.

Urban infrastructure

Beckers, Frank et al (2013), “A Risk-Management Approach to a Successful Infrastructure Project”, *McKinsey Working Papers on Risk*, no. 52.

Stevens, Barrie, Pierre-Alain Schieb and Michel Andrieu (2006), “A Cross-sectoral Perspective on the Development of Global Infrastructures to 2030”, chapter 1 in *Infrastructure to 2030: Telecom, Land Transport, Water and Electricity*, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

World Bank (2010), *Cost-Benefit Analysis in World Bank Projects*, Independent Evaluation Group.

Cities and climate change

Heikkila, E. (2020), Climate change. Chapter 5 in *China from a US policy perspective*. Routledge.

Heikkila, Eric and Mylinh Huang (2014), “Adaptation to Flooding in Urban Areas: An Economic Primer”, *Public Works Management & Policy*, vol. 19(1), 11-36.

Landis, J. D., Hsu, D., & Guerra, E. (2019). Intersecting residential and transportation CO2 emissions: metropolitan climate change programs in the age of Trump. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 39(2), 206-226.

Municipal “clubs”

Delmelle, E. C. (2017). Differentiating pathways of neighborhood change in 50 US metropolitan areas. *Environment and planning A*, 49(10), 2402-2424.

Heikkila, E. and Coutin, J. (2024), Tieboutian clubs revisited, *Annals of Regional Science*.

Heikkila, Eric (2000), “Public Goods and Public Choice”, chapter 5 in *The Economics of Planning*, CUPR Press, Center for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers University.

Tiebout, C. M. (1956). A pure theory of local expenditures, *Journal of political economy*, 64(5), 416-424.

Comparative urbanism

Chen, T. L., Chiu, H. W., & Lin, Y. F. (2020). How do east and southeast Asian cities differ from western cities? A systematic review of the urban form characteristics. *Sustainability*, 12(6), 2423.

Goytia, C. and Heikkila, E. (2025). Case study comparisons. Chapter 11, in *Urban land management and housing outcomes: A global perspective*. Routledge, forthcoming.

Novotný, J., Chakraborty, S., & Maity, I. (2022). Urban expansion of the 43 worlds' largest megacities: A search for unified macro-patterns. *Habitat International*, 129, 102676.

Randolph, G. F., & Storper, M. (2023). Is urbanisation in the Global South fundamentally different? Comparative global urban analysis for the 21st century. *Urban Studies*, 60(1), 3-25.

Scott, A. J. (2022). The constitution of the city and the critique of critical urban theory. *Urban Studies*, 59(6), 1105-1129.