



Course ID and Title: RED 398 SHAPING CITIES THROUGH REAL ESTATE

Units: 4.0

SPRING 2025, Mondays: 6:00 – 9:20 p.m.

Location: VPD 110

Instructor: Vanessa Delgado

Office Hours: By appointment and virtual

Contact Info: vd24520@usc.edu or (310) 467-7408 cell phone

Course Description

Real estate development is not only a dynamic and multifaceted process but also an innovative and creative one. Through a series of “core” lectures we introduce the fundamentals of real estate development: land acquisition, due diligence, land entitlements, approvals, and construction. We discuss the synergy between planning theory, land use regulation and the approval process. Lastly, we introduce various typologies including infill, mixed-use, multi-family, suburban, and master planned communities within the broader context of the real estate development process. We also discuss the shortcomings of various typologies and ways to improve them for future generations.

The instructor for this course is a professional with decades of experience in the field of development, planning and local government. As such, this is a practical course with emphasis on real life experiences, case studies and recent projects. Los Angeles and its vicinity will be used as our learning grounds.

Learning Objectives

Cities, real estate markets and land regulations are complex and ever changing. Successful developers artfully integrate the mechanisms of land policy, regulations, market conditions, architecture, and urban planning to achieve their goals. Upon successful completion of this course, students will have a fundamental understanding of this complex web, how to navigate through it, assess risks and discover opportunities.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

The material in this course will be predominantly presented through lectures and case studies in class. As such, there are no required readings and taking good notes is imperative. However, articles and materials will be distributed for review as directed.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

The course will include a combination of quizzes, a midterm and a final project.

Attendance

Unless students provide an accommodation letter from USC’s Office of Student Accessibility Services, attendance and active participation is expected in the classroom. Any student with such accommodations should submit their accommodation document to instructor as soon as possible to discuss appropriate accommodations.

Each unexcused absence is a 1- point deduction from your total grade in the course.

Attendance will be taken during the first 5 minutes of class.

Students who are experiencing illness should not attend class in person. Students must inform the instructor in advance of any class sessions they cannot attend for medical reasons and present a medical note. Students will not be penalized for not attending class in-person under these circumstances. However, students are encouraged to arrange with a classmate to share detailed notes with them.

Participation

Participation and attendance in this course are required. This includes asking relevant questions from the instructor, answering questions when asked by the instructor and participating in peer-to-peer discussions in class.

Grading

Exams and quizzes will be based on percentages and the final project and podcast report will be assigned letter grades. The Final grade will be a letter grade based on the breakdown below.

Grades will be determined according to the following approximate weights:

Class Discussion and Attendance	15%
Quizzes	20%
Midterm	30%
Final and Presentations (Case Study)	35%
Total	100%

Communications

I am reachable by email. When communicating by email, please use the phrase “RED 398” in the subject line. I am also available for virtual office hours by prior appointment only.

Field Trips

There will be at least one class period held off-campus, to inspect and evaluate particular real estate projects. If these field trips change, the course calendar will be revised.

Guest Speakers

I plan to invite between 3 – 4 guest speakers over the course of the class. If additional guest speakers are scheduled, the course calendar will be revised.

Subject to further refinement as the course unfolds, a schedule of topics to be covered within the course is as follows:

COURSE SCHEDULE
(As of January 6, 2025)

WEEK	DATE	Topic/Activity Description	QUIZ	OFF-CAMPUS ACTIVITY
1	1/13	COURSE OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION		
2	1/20	NO CLASS (MLK DAY)		
3	1/27	THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS		
4	2/3	ENTITLEMENTS	Quiz #1	
5	2/10	DUE DILIGENCE	Quiz #2	
6	2/17	NO CLASS (PRESIDENT'S DAY)		
7	2/24	LAND ACQUISITION		
8	3/3	DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE	Quiz #3	
9	3/10	URBAN VS SUBURBAN TYPOLOGY		
10	3/17	NO-CLASS (SPRING BREAK)		
11	3/24	MULTI-FAMILY TYPOLOGY		La Guadalupe Project 110 South Boyle, BH
12	3/31	CONSTRUCTION	Quiz #4	
13	4/7	ART & PUBLIC OPEN SPACES		
14	4/14	AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONSIDERATIONS		
15	4/21	CASE STUDY OVERVIEW	Quiz #5	
16	4/28	CASE STUDY PRESENTATIONS		

Statement on University Academic and Support Systems

Policy for the use of AI Generators

This course aims to develop creative, analytical, and critical thinking skills. Therefore, all assignments should be prepared by the student working individually or in groups. Students may not have another person or entity complete any substantive portion of the assignment. Developing strong competencies in these areas will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, using AI-generated text, code, or other content is prohibited in this course, will be identified as plagiarism, and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity. If found responsible for an academic violation, students may be assigned university outcomes, such as suspension or expulsion from the university, and grade penalties, such as an "F" grade on the assignment, exam, or in the course.

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. [The Office of Student Accessibility Services](#) (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at [osas.usc.edu](#). You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Student Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress:

To be eligible for certain kinds of financial aid, students are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their degree objectives. Visit the [Financial Aid Office webpage](#) for [undergraduate](#)- and [graduate-level](#) SAP eligibility requirements and the appeals process.

Support Systems:

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

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

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline consists of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

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) 740-2500

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

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411

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

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101

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

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) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

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.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.