

**University of Florida
Department of Political Science
Fall 2025**

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Politics of Latin American Housing (LAS 4935/POS 4931)

Course Description

This course will consider how politics and policies can assist in shaping housing, cities, homelessness, and suburbia in Latin America. Some examples of class material will consider the early origins of modern cities, the development of suburbia, recent developments such as public housing, gentrification, and gated communities.

Course Objectives

Students will debate the common themes of Latin American housing politics; analyze how the field of political science has contributed to the understanding of housing in Latin America. Also students will analyze the contributions from other fields that have tried to address power dynamics in Latin America.

About the Syllabus

Based on the composition of the class, our progress discussing these issues, elements beyond our control, and student needs, this syllabus is flexible and may change. Throughout the semester, you will be notified of any changes that might emerge. During the first day of class the professor will read and explain this syllabus at length. It is the student's responsibility to understand the requirements for this class and asking all the appropriate questions about this document to the professor. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at <https://catalogue.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance>.

Readings

The assigned texts are required and available at the UF Bookstore. It will be our source of discussion and used extensively. In addition, during the course the professor will offer required readings that will be available on our Canvas page identified by a C. This syllabus is a living document, and in case of changes in the readings students will be properly notified.

Class Text

Ward, Jiménez Huerta and Di Virgilio (eds) (2015). *Housing Policy in Latin American Cities*. New York: Routledge.

Texts for Papers

Fraser, Valerie (2001) *Building the New World*. New York: Verso.

Herrera, Verónica (2024) *Slow Harms and Citizen Action*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Writing Requirements and Grade

The grade will be based on reaction papers (10 points), first short paper (20 points), a mid-term examination (20 points), second short paper (20 points), a second examination (20 points), attendance (5 points), participation (5 points).

Reaction Papers (10 points)

Class members will be asked to submit via Canvas 490-500 words, single spaced- reaction paper every Tuesdays and Thursdays before class (unless otherwise noted by the professor). The reaction paper should not be a summary of the readings, but instead it should: *ask probing questions, propose what might come next, compare or contrast this reading or concepts to another paper or concepts we have discussed in class, highlight important implications of the work for understanding Latin American Housing politics*. The rubric and specific details will be made available on Canvas. The grade scale for this assignment is 0 points for papers that were not submitted, 1 point for a satisfactory submission and 2 points for a remarkable submission. The professor will randomly select five papers to calculate your grade. Papers that are not submitted through Canvas will be penalized. Please familiarize yourself with Canvas.

Two Four Page Papers (20 + 20= 40 points)

Students will read one of the books (see above) and address the question offered by the professor. This four-page, double-spaced paper should have a total of 980-1,000 words. The assignment will rely only on the selected book as a source.

Midterm Exam (20 points)

The mid-term will be held during class hours. Blue books will be required, and the student is expected to complete the exam during the exam period.

Second Exam (20 points)

The second exam will be due at the end of the semester. The format of the exam will be announced in a timely fashion during the semester.

Participation (5 points)

Students are expected to attend and be active components of the class and discussion. It is expected that by the end of the semester all students have participated by offering quality contributions. The rubric for participation will be posted on our Canvas page. If you do not feel comfortable by participating in class, feel free to send me an email with your thoughts to casuarez@ufl.edu.

Attendance (5 points)

The professor will take attendance either by roll book, canvas, or index card. Students are therefore allowed three absences from days of class without penalty. Any absence after the

third one will be penalized by taking three points per missed class. A student who leaves the class before it is over will not be considered as present in terms of attendance. Written evidence will be required to justify absences. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of their number of absences during the semester. If a student has any questions about their attendance on a particular day, this issue should be brought up in writing no later than the following class. Students that are late will be marked as such, and three recorded late arrivals will be counted as one absence.

Grade scale

A	94 and above
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D+	67-69
D	64-66
D-	60-63
E	59 and below

The Canvas grade book will be updated as class assignments are graded. Please note that the grade book does not include the grades for Participation and Attendance.

On Timeliness

Students are expected to turn in their assigned work on time. If a student cannot turn in their work on time they will have to offer written evidence to justify the tardiness. If said evidence is not produced one letter grade will be deducted per day after due date.

Academic Honesty

An important component in academic work is recognizing one's work as well as others. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are not allowed. **Any violations of the academic honesty policy will be vigorously pursued. All students are expected to adhere scrupulously to the University policy concerning academic honesty.** In order to respect this principle students are expected to abide by the Academic Honesty Policy. A copy of the Academic Honesty Policy can be found in the following link, <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>. It is the student's responsibility to read and understand the policy. Following these guidelines will assure that original academic work will be recognized and celebrated.

Concerns with a Grade

In the case that a student disagrees with a grade that concern should be presented in writing. This statement should be handed in writing the next class day after receiving your grade. The merits of the concern will be evaluated taking into consideration how deeply the student is thinking about the subject at hand, and whether this student can provide textual evidence to justify their claim. After careful evaluation, I will notify the student about my decision and adjust the grade accordingly if applicable.

Incompletes

Students who have not completed the required class work will only be evaluated by the work that was turned in by the day it was due. Incompletes will only be awarded under exceptional circumstances. Incompletes will be given when students comply with the following conditions, (1) notifying the professor two weeks prior to the last day of class, (2) providing written evidence for the medical condition, or situation that has prompted the student to request an incomplete. The student and professor should agree upon a proper arrangement on how the missing work will be submitted. The student will have the following semester as the time period to complete the missing work; failure to do so will result in an E.

Accommodations

Testing accommodations and other needs will be addressed for students with proper documentation. Please make sure to inform me of these needs in writing during the first week of class. Retroactive accommodations will not be considered. In case of questions about Disability Resource Center feel free to contact them at <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

Classroom interaction

Respect is always required. Textual evidence is crucial when engaging in intelligent academic debates. Please make use of this tool when elaborating your arguments in the classroom. Refrain from comments that are not related to class discussion. Video or audio recording of the class is not allowed. The use of cell phones is prohibited; laptops will be allowed until disruptive to the class. The topics we discuss in this course may be controversial and may touch upon deeply held positions or beliefs held by you or your classmates. While I want to encourage open discussion, I also encourage you to consider how your interventions affect others. How we say something is often even more important than what we say; if you are struggling with how to articulate your questions or reactions to the readings please inform the professor.

Course evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see [this link](#).

Course Outline

I. Introduction (8/21)

Review course syllabus

II. Place, Space, Time, Politics (8/26-8/28)

Readings: Reading: Yi-Fu Tuan, *Language and the Making of Place C*; David Harvey, *Between Space and Time C*; Parkinson, *Place and Politics C*.

III. Theoretical Considerations (9/2-9/4)

Readings: Judd, *Theorizing the City*. C; Pader, *Spaces of Hate* C.

First Paper Question Distributed (9/4)

IV. The Role of Planning and Planners (9/9-9/11)

Readings: Angotti and Irazábal, *Planning Latin American Cities: Dependencies and “Best Practices”* C; Josh Lerner, *Playing with Power: Participatory Planning Games in Rosario's Villas* C.

V. Urban Governance and Citizen Participation (9/16-9/23)

Serdült, Uwe, and Yanina Welp, *How Sustainable is Democratic Innovation? Tracking Neighborhood Councils in Montevideo* C; Tobias Franz, *Urban Governance and Economic Development in Medellín* C; Koch and Sánchez, *Participation without Power: The Failure of Citizen Participation in Barranquilla* C, Gilbert, *Urban Governance in the South* C.

First Paper Due (9/23)

VI. City Marketing and Branding (9/25)

Readings: Suárez Carrasquillo, Carlos A. *Gated communities and city marketing: Recent trends in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico* C, Kalandides, *City Marketing for Bogotá* C.

VII. Producing Social Housing (9/30-10/7)

Readings: Waddell *Old Habits Die Hard, Political Patronage and Remittance-Led Development in Guanajuato, Mexico* C; Valenzuela, *Failed Markets* C; Libertun, *Why there?* C; Ward, Ch. 9.

VIII. Political Contestation (10/9-10/14)

Readings: David Renfrew “*We Are Not Marginals*” *The Cultural Politics of Lead Poisoning in Montevideo, Uruguay* C; Perry, “*If We Didn’t Have Water*”: *Black Women’s Struggle for Urban Land Rights in Brazil* C, Basile and Reyes, *Contesting Housing Commodification*. C

Mid Term Exam (10/16)

IX. From informal to formal housing (10/21-10/23)

Readings: Vieda, *Informal Housing*; DiVirgilio, Ch.11; Jiménez, Ch.12, Holston, *Autoconstruction*. C

X. Climate Change (11/4-11/6)

Readings: Talbot, *Informality in Post disaster*; Kus, *Designing for a Flow*; Bonaccorso, *Low cost DIY*.

Second Paper Question Distributed (11/6)

XI. Case Studies

A. Caribbean (11/13)

Readings: Schmelzkopf, *Scale and Narrative in the Struggle for Environment and Livelihood in Vieques, Puerto Rico* C; Mycoo, *The retreat of the upper and middle classes to gated communities in the poststructural adjustment era: the case of Trinidad* C.

B. Central America (11/18)

Readings: Jiménez and Cruz, Ch. 3; Ward, Ch. 4.

Second Paper Due (11/20)

C. South America (11/20)

Readings: Abbate et.al. *Discrimination against gay and transgender people in Latin America* C; Zapata, *Transnational migration, remittances and the financialization of housing in Colombia* C, Rojas and Ward, Ch. 8.

Second Exam (TBA)