

**University of Florida**  
**Department of Political Science/Center for Latin American Studies**  
**Spring 2026**

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**Grinter Hall 338**

**Politics of US Housing (POS 4931/LAS 4935)**

Course Description

This course will consider how politics can assist in shaping housing, cities, homelessness, and suburbia. Significant attention will be given to understanding governmental policies that attempt to influence how people live. Some examples will consider the early origins of modern cities, the development of suburbia, and historically recent developments such as public housing, gentrification, and gated communities.

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.

Assigned Texts

Class Readings

Alex F. Schwartz. (2021). *Housing Policy in the United States*. Fourth Edition. Routledge.

Readings for short papers

Esther Sullivan. (2018). *Manufactured Insecurity*. Berkeley: University of California Press

George Lipsitz. (2024). *The Danger Zone is Everywhere*. Berkeley: University of California 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 Monday and Friday (unless told otherwise 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 US 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 grade six weeks, and out of those six reaction papers the five papers with the best grades will be used 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](mailto:casuarez@ufl.edu).

#### Attendance (5 points)

The professor will take attendance by canvas. Students are therefore allowed three absences from days of class without penalty. Four absences will see a three-point penalty out of five points. Five or more absences will lead to 0 points for the attendance grade. 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 in order 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.

### On Timeliness

Students are expected to turn in their assigned work on time through Canvas, not email. If students are not able to turn in their work on time through Canvas they will have offer written evidence in order to justify the tardiness. If said evidence is not produced one letter grade will be deducted per day after due date.

### 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

### On Canvas

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. Also Canvas calculates attendance throughout the semester in a way that does not reflect your final attendance grade.

### 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 or not 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 required at all times. 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. Unauthorized 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>.

## **I. Introduction (1/13)**

Review course syllabus and introduction.

## **II. Setting Boundaries**

Reading: Yi-Fu Tuan, *Language and the Making of Place*. C (1/15)

Questions for discussion: How crucial is language in the making of place? Is language given too much credit for the making of place?

Reading: David Harvey, *Between Space and Time*. C (1/17)

Questions for discussion: How have notions of space and time changed throughout the centuries? What is the connection of the mode of production to our understanding of space?

## **First Paper Prompt will be distributed (1/22)**

Reading: Ellen Pader, *Space of Hate*. C (1/22)

Questions for discussion: How can housing codes impact everyday life? Do housing codes respond to a particular cultural notion? Why are occupancy standards a culturally contested dynamic?

### **III. Cities and Urban Politics**

Reading: Judd, *Theorizing the City*. C (1/24)

Questions for discussion: What do the Chicago schools argues when understanding the city? What has been the contribution of the Los Angeles school?

Reading: Ansell, *The Politics of Housing*. C (1/27)

*Questions for discussion:* What are the political causes and consequences of homeownership? Why political science has not taken housing seriously?

### **IV. Housing Policy in the United States**

#### *A. Why Housing Matters*

Reading: Schwartz, Chapter 1. (1/29)

Questions for discussion: What is the goal behind housing policy? How can American housing policy be best summarized?

Reading: Schwartz, Chapter 2. (1/31)

Questions for discussion: What are some of the trends seen in housing policy? Can we point to persistent problems?

#### *B. Financing, Affordability, Access*

Reading: Schwartz, Chapter 3. (2/3)

Questions for discussion: What types of measures have been taken in order to make housing affordable? Who ends up subsidizing efforts to make housing more affordable?

### **First Paper Due (2/5)**

Reading: Schwartz, Chapter 4. (2/5)

Questions for discussion: What is the nexus between taxes and housing? How have the different policies behind taxation changed throughout time?

Reading: Gromis, *Eviction from Public Housing*. C (2/7)

Questions for discussion: Why the government has not studied evictions at the national level?

Vale, *Public Housing in the US*. C (2/10)

Questions for discussion: How did the author became in public housing as his line of research?

#### *C. Informal Housing*

Reading: Herbert, Durst and Nevárez, *A Typology of Informal Housing in the United States*. C (2/12)

Questions for discussion: How does informal housing looks like in the US? What's the typology that the authors have created?

### **V. Federal Housing Policies**

Reading: Schwartz, Chapter 6. (2/14)

What is the origin of public housing? What types of policies were set in place in order to promote their emergence?

Reading: Schwartz, Chapter 7. (2/17)

Questions for discussion: Why did the Federal government get involved in privately owned rental housing? Who promoted these changes?

Reading: Schwartz, Chapter 8. (2/19)

Questions for discussion: Why have vouchers become more prevalent in the past three decades? What is the profile of those who make use of these vouchers?

Reading: Fraser, *HOPE VI*. C (2/21)

Questions for discussion: Why has it been argued that HOPE VI can be understood as a colonial project? Are there benefits to mixed income housing?

Reading: Wang and Balachandran, *Inclusionary housing in the United States*. C (2/24)

Questions for discussion: What is Inclusionary Housing? Why is it important as part of the affordable housing debate in the US?

### **Midterm (2/26)**

#### **VI. Suburbia**

Reading: Clapson, *The City Spreads*. C (2/28)

Questions for discussion: When can it be determined that Suburbia started? How did the automobile facilitate the expansion of Suburbia?

### **Second Paper Prompt will be distributed (3/3)**

Reading: Clapson, *The Suburban Aspiration*. C (3/3)

Questions for discussion: What were some of the values present in Suburbia? Have the patterns of urban growth been the same?

#### **VII. Current Challenges**

##### *A. Political Ideology and Housing Policies*

Reading: Weaver, *By Design or by Default: Varieties of Neoliberal Urban Development*. C (3/5)

Questions for discussion: What types of practices have been pursued to channel capital friendly policies to cities? What are the enduring legacy neoliberal policies on living conditions?

Reading: Berrill (et.al.), *Linking Housing Policy, Housing Typology, and Residential Energy Demand in the United States*. C (3/7)

Questions for discussion: How do the types of housing structures that households live in impact greenhouse gas emissions?

Reading: Mignucci, *Modern Urbanism in Puerto Rico*. C (3/10)

Questions for discussion: How did American notions of modernity impacted Puerto Rican housing? How did Puerto Rican policymakers respond to American influences?

##### *B. Housing Discrimination and Insecurity*

Reading: Schwartz, Chapter 10. (3/12)

Questions for discussion: What has been the role of the Federal government in assisting those with special needs for housing? Where do these efforts stand today?

### **Second Paper Due (3/14)**

Reading: Schwartz, Chapter 11. (3/24)

Questions for discussion: How has housing discrimination looked throughout time? What types of measures have been taken in order to alleviate such discrimination?

Reading: Haberle, *Furthering Fair Housing*. C

Questions for discussion: Why is the Fair Housing Act an unresolved issue?

Reading: Lanione, *Radical Housing*. C (3/26)

Questions for discussion: How can new radical futures be set in place? How is housing the setting to place these political practices into action?

### C. Redlining

Reading: Lane, *Historic Redlining*. C (3/28)

Questions for discussion: How is historic redlining associated with air pollution?

Reading: Wilson, *Urban Heat Management and Redlining*. C (3/31)

Questions for discussion: How has disinvestment been a legacy of redlining? How is the exposure to more heat related to redlining?

Reading: Shaker, *Redlining, Racism, and food access*. C (4/2)

Questions for discussion: How has redlining impacted access to food in the present?

### D. Homeownership

Reading: Schwartz, Chapter 13. (4/4)

Questions for discussion: What type of policies led to the foreclosure crisis? What types of steps have been taking in order to prevent a similar situation in the future?

Reading: Esparza, *We Lived as Spouses*. C (4/7)

Questions for discussion: What were the challenges that same sex couples faced in the past over claiming homeownership?

### E. Future Prospects

Reading: Bendaoud, *Question worth 20 million lives*. C (4/9)

Questions for discussion: Why Federal housing assistance has not had an Obamacare?

Reading: Thompson, *Caring Housing Futures* C (4/11)

Questions for discussion: What is radical care framework? What is the author's perspective as to how understand rent control?

Reading: Yamen et.al. *In Defense of the Landlords*. C (4/14)

Questions for discussion: Why do the authors raise the point that landlords should be defended?

Reading: Greenberg et.al, *Housing Speculation, Affordable Investments, and Tenant Outcomes in New York City*. C (4/16)

Questions for discussion: What is the relationship between housing speculation and affordable housing? Why do young adults face affordability challenges?

**Second Exam TBA**

