

# GEOG 445: Geography of Housing

University of Washington, Summer B-term 2023

**Instructor:** Theodore “Teddy” Davenport (he/they)

Office Hours: Monday 2-3pm

## Course Description

This course is an exploration of housing histories, markets, and policies from a geographic perspective. Earlier this year, a survey by the Washington Department of Commerce found that housing costs and homelessness were the top two issues of concern for Washington state residents. These issues are felt particularly strongly in Seattle, where, in 2022, the median house cost was \$767,500 and the median rent was \$1,801 (Census 2023). In this course, we will explore how housing-related topics such as gentrification, redlining, and housing affordability are inherently spatial issues. This course will mainly be focused on US and Washington housing geographies, but we will also discuss the ramifications that the US housing landscape has on other places in the world. Finally, we will take a justice-oriented approach to housing by considering both how housing geographies uniquely affect marginalized people and what work is currently being done to address housing inequity.

## Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify the key social, political, economic, cultural, historical, and spatial forces driving housing issues in the United States.
- Describe the nuances that a geographical approach brings to housing (as compared to, for example, an economic or sociological approach).
- Explain the history of housing in the United States from the Great Depression to today.
- Examine how historical geographies of housing affect modern spaces of housing using archival data, particularly redlining maps.
- Author a report telling a story about housing in a city of their choice by evaluating qualitative and quantitative data.
- Create a cohesive set of maps using data sources like PolicyMap and appraise what these maps tell about a city.

## Course Structure

### Structure

This is a virtual, asynchronous course. The course is structured through four weekly modules that run Thursday-Wednesday. Modules contain a combination of lectures, readings, external videos, podcasts, and assignments. Assignments for each week will *typically* consist of one discussion post and one section of your course project due on Wednesdays at 11:59pm, although make sure to check the course schedule for exact deadlines.

### Assignment Descriptions

#### Weekly Discussions

You will have weekly discussions that will ask you to reflect on the materials for that week.

Your first discussion post will be a simple introduction post graded for completion. All subsequent discussion posts will be graded for completion and content – make sure to pay attention to the discussion prompts and engage with course material for full credit!

#### Course Project

Since this is a shortened course, you do not have a major final project. Rather, your course project will be a series of housing geography reports on a city of your choice from a list of 211 that will be provided to you during the Week 1 assignment. Your weekly labs are guided assignments that will help you create these reports,

which will consist of maps, data, archival analysis, geographic analysis, and narrative text. Each lab will draw heavily from PolicyMap, a web mapping resource that we have premium access to through UW Libraries.

**Lab 1:** You will choose the city that you are going to focus on for the course, get familiar with its general history and notable features, and evaluate the current state of its housing geography, which you will visualize in PolicyMap using Census data.

**Lab 2:** We will be focusing on historical and current racism in your city. We will be exploring redlining data from the 1930s, looking at maps showing current measures of racism in housing, and reflecting on what you've learned through your maps. We'll also be using PolicyMap again to create some visualizations to help with our analysis.

**Lab 3:** During this lab, we'll be thinking closely about short-term rentals (such as Airbnb), housing financialization, and gentrification. We will be evaluating geographic trends for Airbnb market data for your city and evaluate permanent housing affordability using data available to us through PolicyMap.

**Lab 4:** In lab 4, you will evaluate how social inequity (such as poverty, gender, and disability) affects housing through data on PolicyMap. You will also research a housing nonprofit/organization, housing political movement, or homeless service provider that exists in your city and evaluate how different aspects of their work might fit with our model of housing justice.

#### *Assignment Evaluation*

Assignment	Due Date	% of Grade
Discussion Posts (total 40% of grade)		
• Week 1 Discussion: Introduction	Fri, 7/21, at 11:59pm	8%
• Week 1 Reflection	Wed, 7/26, at 11:59pm	8%
• Week 2 Reflection	Wed, 8/2, at 11:59pm	8%
• Week 3 Reflection	Wed, 8/9, at 11:59pm	8%
• Week 4 Reflection	Wed, 8/16, at 11:59pm	8%
Course Project (total 60% of grade)		
• Course Project Lab 1	Wed, 7/26, at 11:59pm	15%
• Course Project Lab 2	Wed, 8/2, at 11:59pm	15%
• Course Project Lab 3	Wed, 8/9, at 11:59pm	15%
• Course Project Lab 4	Wed, 8/16, at 11:59pm	15%

## Course Schedule

	Lectures	Reading(s)	Podcast	Assignments
Module 1: Key Concepts in Housing Geography	Introduction to the Course Key Concepts in Housing Geography Introduction to Housing Markets	Abraham, R. (2023, July 13). U.S. Building More Apartments Than It Has In Decades, But Not For the Poor: Report. Vice. <a href="https://www.vice.com/en/article/y3w3aj/us-building-more-apartments-than-it-has-in-decades-but-not-for-the-poor-report">https://www.vice.com/en/article/y3w3aj/us-building-more-apartments-than-it-has-in-decades-but-not-for-the-poor-report</a>	<i>According to Need</i> (Series within 99% Invisible), <a href="#">Chapter 3: Housing First</a>	Introduction on Discussion Board Reflection #1 Lab 1: Getting to Know Your City
Module 2: Early Roots: Housing Histories of the US	History of Housing 2008 Financial Crisis Redlining	Thompson, S. (2022). Caring Housing Futures: A Radical Care Framework for Understanding Rent Control Politics in Seattle, USA. Antipode. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12874">https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12874</a>	99% <i>Invisible</i> , <a href="#">The Epic of Collier Heights</a>	Reflection #2 Lab 2: Redlining and Housing Racism in Your City
Module 3: Financializati on in Housing Geography	Gentrification Financialization of Housing	Medvedeva, N. (2023). The Romantic Anti-Capitalisms of Short-Term Rental Hosting. Antipode. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12938">https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12938</a> Vogell, H. (2022, October 15). Rent Going Up? One Company's Algorithm Could Be Why. ProPublica. <a href="https://www.propublica.org/article/yieldstar-rent-increase-realpage-rent">https://www.propublica.org/article/yieldstar-rent-increase-realpage-rent</a>	<i>Cities After...</i> , <a href="#">The Threat of Mega- Landlords</a>	Reflection #3 Lab 3: Housing Financialization in Your City
Module 4: Geographies of Housing Justice	Housing Justice Transy House Documentary	Ramírez, M. M. (2020). Take the houses back/take the land back: Black and Indigenous urban futures in Oakland. <i>Urban Geography</i> , 41(5), 682–693. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2020.1736440">https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2020.1736440</a>	<i>Disability Visibility</i> , <a href="#">Ep. 73: Housing</a>	Reflection #4 Lab 4: Housing Justice in Your City

## Course Policies

### *Communication*

You will be expected to check your UW email and Canvas notifications regularly. Please either use your UW email address (*not* your personal email address) or the Canvas messaging system to contact me or your TA. We will do our best to answer your email within 24 hours, but please note that we are generally not available during nights or weekends.

### *Late Policy*

Assignments due dates and times are in Pacific Time. Assignments will be marked down by 10% for each day that they are late and will not be accepted after one week. If you have extenuating circumstances that will prevent you from turning in an assignment on time, *please let me or your TA know as soon as possible*, preferably before the assignment is due, so that we can work out a solution, such as an extension.

**Note: No late submissions for your final lab (Lab 4) will be accepted.** On the instructor side, all final grades are due on 8/22, so we need your final draft in on time in order for me and your TA to meet this deadline.

### *Academic Misconduct*

Academic misconduct issues are extremely serious. You are expected to know the [Student Code of Conduct](#) and to review this syllabus section carefully. The most relevant rules for this course are:

- Do not submit someone else's work without a citation. This includes paraphrasing.
- **Make sure to always acknowledge your sources.** The only except to this is common knowledge. Within the context of this class, common knowledge includes material that I have provided in my lectures. Any external material—including readings and YouTube videos I've assigned—needs to be cited.
- **You can't turn in the same assignment for multiple classes.** Canvas tracks your writing across courses and will flag your work if you've copied it from a previous course.
- **Do not use AI programs such as ChatGPT to write assignments for you.** AI like ChatGPT is [bad for the environment](#), [exploits cheap labor from the Global South](#) (content warning: mentions of violence and sexual abuse), and [steals material without consent from creators](#). If you use ChatGPT, treat it like a worse version of Wikipedia – you can use it to get a general overview of a topic if you're really struggling, but you should definitely double-check whether what it says is correct and you're not allowed to copy or paraphrase its outputs for your assignments.
- NOTE: Do not upload or copy/paste any course materials that I have created to any AI data sourcing or any other website.

For your first violation, regardless of severity, you will receive a zero on an assignment with a clear explanation of what misconduct you were docked for and then given one chance to resubmit it with the issue fixed. Consequences for subsequent violations depend on their severity. Sometimes, plagiarism is a genuine mistake—you forget to cite a page for one of your sentences or accidentally leave a source out of your bibliography. These smaller incidents will be subject to the same policy as the first violation, where you will get a zero and one chance to correct. However, more flagrant violations—such as copying entire paragraphs or not including any citations for a paper—will be reported to the Geography department and UW, which could result in consequences such as being put on academic probation or expelled.

When students cheat or plagiarize, it's often because they are overwhelmed, fear failure, or have extenuating circumstances that prevent them from fully engaging with the course. Instead of engaging in academic misconduct, I would much rather you ask for an extension in advance, ask for classroom accommodations, or submit a partial assignment—a 25% on a paper is better than a zero or getting reported to the department for cheating.

You will never be penalized for asking in advance of an assignment's due date if something counts as a violation of academic dishonesty. Please talk to me or the TA if you are worried about whether something counts as a violation.

### *Respectful Language and Discussion*

We will be discussing difficult topics during this course. You are expected to be respectful and use inclusive language in your discussion posts, narrative text in your reports, and communication with your fellow colleagues/instructor/TA. If you have questions about this, please feel free to check the term you have a question about with the University of Washington's [Equitable Language Guide](#) for a quick overview, or [The Diversity Style Guide](#), which is an in-depth guide aimed towards media professionals that goes into a lot of detail about the history and proper usage for demographic terms. You can also reach out to me or your TA with any questions or concerns about respectful and inclusive language.

### *Religious Accommodations*

"Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at [Religious Accommodations Policy](#). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the [Religious Accommodations Request form](#)." ([Source](#))

### *Disability Accommodations*

"It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please activate your accommodations via myDRS so we can discuss how they will be implemented in this course.

If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), contact DRS directly to set up an Access Plan. DRS facilitates the interactive process that establishes reasonable accommodations. Contact DRS at [disability.uw.edu](mailto:disability.uw.edu)." ([Source](#))

Disability justice is an important facet of social justice that does not always neatly fit within the academy's expectations of productivity and strict deadlines. If you are having trouble with DRS or need accommodations sooner than they can process your request, please reach out to me during the first week of quarter so we can meet and discuss your needs for this course. Please note that you are *not* required to tell me or your TA what your disability is; to protect your privacy, DRS only tells us what accommodations you need.

As part of my disability justice pedagogy, all course materials will be captioned and/or have accompanying transcripts, assignments will not be timed, and assignment expectations and rubrics will be as specific as possible. If there is anything else that I can do to make the course more accessible to you, please let me know, even if you're not established through DRS.

## **Student Resources**

The Department of Geography has compiled a list of [critical resources](#) that can be found at the UW and in Seattle. Please review this list if you need resources for: childcare, disability access/accommodations, emergency funding, food, healthcare/health insurance, housing, internet and technology access, legal services, mental health, work, transportation, undocumented/immigrant/refugee student needs, and COVID-19 information.

*Technology Access*

Since this is a virtual course that requires computer and internet access, I wanted to highlight UW's [Student Technology Loan Program](#), where you can reserve and check out technology, including laptops, for up to 41 days. UPS shipping is also available for some items, including laptops, for people who are currently outside of the City of Seattle.

If you are struggling to access the internet at home, you have options. City of Seattle maintains [a list of low-cost \(around \\$10/month\) internet plans](#) in the city. Eligible low-income households throughout the entire US can get a \$30 discount on their internet through the FCC's [Affordable Connectivity Program](#). You can also access free WiFi on UW's campus and at your local Seattle Public Library (SPL). You can also [check out a hot spot from SPL for free](#) so that you can access internet at home, although do note that these can have long wait times. If you are currently outside of Seattle, your local library branch will generally have free WiFi access as well.

## Grading Scale

Because UW does not have a standard scale for converting percentages to a 4.0 scale, I have provided the following chart that I will use in order to determine your final grade.

<b>Percentage Earned</b>	<b>4.0 Equivalent</b>
98-100	4.0
96-97	3.9
94-95	3.8
92-93	3.7
91	3.6
90	3.5
89	3.4
88	3.3
87	3.2
86	3.1
85	3.0
84	2.9
83	2.8
82	2.7
80-81	2.6
79	2.5
78	2.4
77	2.3
76	2.2
75	2.1
73-74	2.0
72	1.9
71	1.8
70	1.7
69	1.6
68	1.5
67	1.4
66	1.3
65	1.2
64	1.1
63	1.0
62	0.9
61	0.8
60	0.7 (lowest passing)
59 or below	0.0 (no credit)