

## ***PLS 592—Seminar in Housing and Transportation Policy***

Fall 2011

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Tuesday and Thursday, 3-5 pm Or by appointment

***Course Description:*** This seminar in housing and transportation policy is designed especially for those MPA students whose concentration is policy analysis and planning. The economics and politics of each of these policy areas are discussed at length and students are asked to complete 2 original field projects, one on housing and one on transportation. The broad goal is to sharpen the skills of students in analyzing and suggesting solutions to community problems in the housing and transportation areas. This is a practice oriented class although there will be some exposure to the theory underlying the dynamics of these policy areas.

### ***Course Goals and Objectives:***

To gain understanding of the dynamics of housing and transportation policy in the U.S.  
To gain skills in analyzing and developing solutions for housing and transportation policy in the U.S.

To prepare analyses for decision makers and “policy experts”

To further improve quantitative skills in creating indexes and using comparative data

### ***Assignments and Grades:***

Weekly assignments .....35%

Field Projects (2).....45%

Case study 10%

Class participation.....10%

### ***Books Ordered:***

Alan Altshuler and David Luberoff (2003). Mega Projects. Brookings Institution Press : Washington D.C.. ISBN 0-8157-0129-2.

Anthony Downs (2004). Still Stuck in Traffic, The Brookings Institution: Washington, D.C. ISBN 0-8157-1929-9

Alex Schwartz (2006). Second Edition. Housing Policy in the U.S. Routledge: London. ISBN 10-0425950309.

### Field Projects:

1.Housing Policy. Pick one community or region. Develop a demographic, social, and economic profile of the area. Identify at least 3 major housing problems in the region. Use written sources, documents from organizations and at least three interviews with “housing policy experts”. For each problem document the problem and explore its causes. Pick one problem and develop at least three solutions and recommend one (give rationale). This report should be written for the “policy experts” and decision makers. 10 slide limit in your power point presentation. Turn in the slides. No paper is necessary.

2.Transportation Policy. Pick one community or region. Develop a demographic, social, and economic profile of the area. Identify at least 3 major transportation problems in the region. Use written sources, documents from organizations and at least three interviews with “transportation policy experts”. For each problem document the problem and explore its causes. Pick one problem and develop at least three solutions and recommend one (give rationale). This report should be written for the “policy experts” and decision makers. 10 slide limit.

Case Study. Pick one successful transit or housing project completed in the last 20 years. Indicate what major factors contributed to the completion of this infrastructure. Include federal, local political, economic, and civic factors. 10 points for power point presentation.

## ***Topics and Weekly Assignments:***

August 25     **Introduction**  
**American Dream**  
**Key Concepts in Housing**  
**Importance of Housing in Economy**  
**Suburbia and Gated communities, what is happening with housing in U.S.**  
**What kinds of things can public policy do to ameliorate some of the current problems ?**

Read: Chapters 1,2 Schwartz.

September 1 and September 8

**Using data to track housing**  
**Affordable Housing**  
**Key concepts in housing**  
**Housing Markets and filtering**  
**Invasion and Succession of Neighborhoods**  
**Quality of life and housing**  
**New Urbanism**  
**Housing Summit notes (Cape Fear Region)**

Read: use the internet and explore definitions and measures of housing affordability.

Assignment:, September 8. Using power point, display three indicators of affordable housing and then recommend which is the most useful (and why). The second presentation using power point is to develop 10 indicators which measure the quality of housing in American cities and communities. Have a rationale for the inclusion of each indicator in your index. For the last presentation, collect data for ten cities, counties, or metropolitan areas using the index data you created. Make a slide comparing the ten communities using their scores. What did you find out? Check Census (Census of Housing) and The American Community Survey (ACS) <http://www.census.gov/> .. THIS ASSIGNMENT IS DUE September 8.

September 15 and September 22

**National Housing Policy**  
**Secondary Financial Markets**  
**Subsidized housing**

**Public Housing  
Vouchers  
Movie (Fail)**

Read: Schwartz, Chapters 3-8.

Assignment: Limit yourself to five slides. Pick one federal housing program and do a program analysis---mission, customers, expenditures, major issues. Focus on the last decade. Finally what changes may be needed in this program during the next five years. Go to HUD web-site to identify program for the presentation. THE ASSIGNMENT IS DUE September 22.

September 29

**The Geography of Housing  
Discrimination and Segregation  
Integrating housing and neighborhoods  
Special housing (Housing the Homeless)  
Creative community projects (Habitat for Humanity)**

Read: use the internet to explore research on housing segregation and integration. Especially the geography of segregation. This can include gated communities as well as other enclaves.

Assignment: Write a two page memo indicating what the prospects for change are in neighborhood housing. Will it stay the same, become more integrated in terms of race, income, or class. ? or become more segregated? Give reasons for your answer and integrate research findings into your answer. THE ASSIGNMENT IS DUE September 29.

October 6 and October 13

**Project 1 Presentation on Housing**

**Two weeks for presentations.**

Read: Downs. Stuck in Traffic Chapters 1-5.

October 20

**Mega Projects and Displacement  
Quality of life and congestion in urban areas  
What type of transit systems do people want and will they pay for?**

Read: Downs. Chapters 6-18.

Assignment: Develop ten indicators of the quality of transportation in cities. Then compare ten cities using this index. Present in power point. Cities can be in different states but try to make them the same size. THIS ASSIGNMENT IS DUE October 20..

October 27     **Economics of Transportation**

**Alternative modes of transportation (mass transit, light rail, airports, car pooling, charity cars)**

**Transportation Analysis and Policy**

**Congestion Pricing and the future**

**Other policy issues (spatial mismatch, displacement, funding)**

Read : review Downs, 6-18.

Assignment: Check page 78 in Downs book but develop a power point presentation that examines the five most feasible solutions to congestion. Look at internet as well for solutions. Give reasons for why your recommendations are feasible. THIS ASSIGNMENT IS DUE October 27.

November 3 and November 10  
**and housing**

**Designing better public policy in transportation**

**Project 2 Presentation on Transportation**

November 17

**Everyone will bring a mass transit system to class and summarize what the cities are doing and show slides about their cities. Cities will be assigned.**

December 1

**Key Themes and summary of major elements housing and transportation policy in U.S., some comparative analysis**