

USP 312 Urban Housing and Development Online Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Yiping Fang

“Housing is a human right. There can be no fairness or justice in a society in which some live in homelessness, or in the shadow of that risk, while others cannot even imagine it.”

— [Jordan Flaherty, *Floodlines: Community and Resistance from Katrina to the Jena Six*](#)

USP 312U is a 4-credit course that provides an introduction to urban housing and development. Several versions of this course are offered in different terms with a different focus in the Urban Studies and Planning program. This version will take a comparative perspective to approach housing and development. This class is a U-class for all PSU undergraduate students. The class is an introduction to urban housing and development.

Course Learning Outcomes:

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

- **Analyze** the historical, cultural, and geographic factors that shape urban evolution and diverse housing developments worldwide.
- **Examine** the root causes of complex urban housing challenges by deconstructing the economic, social, and political forces that influence markets.
- **Critically evaluate** the successes and failures of various international approaches to urban housing development.
- **Propose** and advocate for policies that foster sustainable, equitable, and affordable housing within specific regional contexts.
- **Communicate** complex urban planning concepts effectively through collaborative dialogue, integrating cross-cultural comparisons into peer discussions.

This is a [UNST Cluster course](#). This means the course will integrate the four University Studies program learning goals: Communication; Inquiry & Critical Thinking; Diversity, Equity & Social Justice; and Ethics, Agency & Community. Moreover, here are the learning goals for the [Understanding Communities](#) cluster.

COURSE STRUCTURE

This is a fully online, asynchronous course organized into 10 weekly modules. Please expect to dedicate 10 to 12 hours per week to complete all coursework. Here are the main structure:

- **Timeline:** New module opens every Sunday at midnight. Each week, you will complete assigned readings and participate in two discussion forums (requiring one initial post and two peer replies per forum).

- **Course Materials:** Links to a diverse array of readings (news articles, planning reports, legal documents) are provided in each module. For housing-related terminology, refer to the [Encyclopedia of Housing \(EOH\)](#), available as an e-book through the PSU library.
- **Discussion Forums:** Discussions are the major learning activity. You will participate in two forums each week. After completing the readings, submit your initial post by **Wednesday at 11:59 PM**. Also reply to at least two classmates by Sunday at 11:59 PM.
- **Essay Assignments:** Throughout the term, you will submit three essays spaced every 2 to 3 weeks. The final essay will be a collaborative group project.
- **Deadlines & Grace Period:** All assignments and forums close on **Sundays @11:59 PM**, giving you a full week to complete the material. You receive an automatic 24-hour grace period for all deadlines with no permission required.

WEEKLY MODULES THEMES

Each week we will examine a specific aspect of housing issues. Here are the weekly themes:

- Module 1: Housing & Home
- Module 2: Housing Tenure
- Module 3: Neighborhood
- Module 4: Basic Concepts
- Module 5: Housing Market
- Module 6: Housing Policy
- Module 7: Housing Poverty
- Module 8: Housing Welfare
- Module 9: Affordable Housing
- Module 10: Future of Housing

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Your course grade will be based on the following:

- Discussions make up 40% of your final grade. Each forum is worth 2.5 points (5 points total per week). To give you some flexibility, your two lowest discussion forum grades will be dropped at the end of the term. [Canvas Discussion Participation Guidelines](#) is here.
- You will sign up to moderate one discussion forum during the term. One week after your moderated forum closes, submit a "Discussion Moderator Summary" assignment, which is worth 5 points toward your final grade.
- Three major essay assignments usually take 2-3 weeks and have specific due days on specific Sundays. They together count for the other 40% of the final grade. Assignments One and Two are 10 points each. Assignment Three, the group essay, is 20 points.
- There is an anonymous course-end survey, which is worth 5 points.
- The grading rubric is posted at the end of each assignment. Your final grade will be calculated on a 100 number scale, and will be converted to a letter grade.

Final Grade Rubric:

Discussion Forum participation	40%
Moderate and summarize a forum	5%
Essay Assignment 1-3	40%
Course end survey	5%
Total	100%

ONLINE CLASSROOMS EXPECTATIONS

To ensure a productive and welcoming online learning environment, you are expected to:

- **Communicate respectfully:** Treat your peers and instructor with professionalism and tolerance. Because this is an online space, be highly mindful of your written "tone" in discussion boards and emails.
- **Report concerns:** If any forum conversation makes you uncomfortable or crosses the line of respect, please reach out to me immediately.
- **Stay connected:** Log in to Canvas frequently to check for announcements and stay on track with your deadlines.
- **Prepare before you post:** Complete all assigned readings at the beginning of the week before attempting to engage in the discussion forums or complete assignments.
- **Reach out if needed:** While we do not have scheduled live classes, you are always welcome to contact me to schedule a synchronous, one-on-one meeting.

CLASS POLICIES

1. **Deadline Extensions:** Extensions without penalty are granted at the instructor's discretion for compelling, unforeseen emergencies (e.g., health or family crises). To be considered for an extension, you must email me *before* the assignment deadline. Because this course moves quickly, approved extensions will generally be limited to 2 or 3 days to keep you on track with the syllabus.
2. **Academic Integrity, Plagiarism:** All work submitted for this course must be entirely your own. Plagiarism and cheating violate the PSU Code of Student Conduct. If you use outside sources, you must synthesize the information in your own words and provide proper citations. Any academic misconduct will result in a zero for the assignment and may be reported for further university-level disciplinary action. There is a separate document for AI use policy.

3. **Letters of Recommendation:** I am happy to support students by writing letters of recommendation, but I only accept requests when I know I can write a specific and positive endorsement. Because I teach hundreds of students each year, I write letters for those who stand out as hardworking, collegial, and intellectually inquisitive. If you anticipate needing a reference in the future, I encourage you to actively engage in the course so we can build a professional relationship over time.
4. **Course Feedback:** Your feedback on this course is highly valued. I encourage you to share your thoughts on the material and your learning experience at any point during the term via email or online office hours. Please also complete the formal university course evaluations at the end of the quarter to help me continually improve the class.

In the end, I am listing the links to selected university policies:

[Access and inclusion for students with disabilities](#)

[Title IX - Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment Policy and resources](#)

[Digital Accessibility Requirements](#)

[Reporting resources for conduct, student distress, and academic appeals](#)

[Discuss contingency plans in case of ICE enforcement on campus](#)

[Campus student resources](#)

[Guidelines relating to online/remote courses](#)

[Statement about academic honesty](#)

[Statement about AI usage](#)