

**Topics in American Politics and Public Policy:  
Gentrification & Housing Politics  
(21:790:463)**

Fall 2021  
Tuesday 2:30 – 5:20 p.m.  
Smith Hall 244

Instructor: Adam Straub  
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Office Hours: W 12:30 – 2:30 p.m. or by appointment

**Course Overview**

Gentrification has become an inescapable buzzword surrounding the politics of housing and urban development. However, across the US, gentrification has taken many forms, with a variety of causes and effects specific to certain places. A number of other housing problems also exist: eviction, rent burden, displacement, and segregation, to name a few. Even just across our own megalopolis, places like New York City, Jersey City, and Newark (which will be examined in the course) showcase the broad range of interests, institutions, and ideas at stake in the housing politics of our ever-changing cities.

This course is designed to be an introduction to gentrification and other relevant concepts and theories related to housing problems and their politics. The course will begin with an introduction to the concept of gentrification, then explore relevant policies and social transformations as well as examine our case cities. Lastly, this course will consider resistance to gentrification, as well as the possibilities and limits of housing justice advocacy. Overall, the goal of this course is to help students understand neighborhood change, its various origins and consequences, and how these issues are being addressed politically.

**Course Requirements**

**Required Readings**

All required readings will be available on Canvas. The readings are a mix of academic articles, book chapters, websites, videos, and articles from newspapers and magazines. This class will be centered on reading and discussion, therefore it is strongly encouraged that you keep up with the required readings and come prepared to discuss each reading on the day it is assigned.

Some of the reading will be challenging, and I encourage students to focus on the following when reading and note-taking, especially for the academic works we read:

Question: What are the central questions that the author is asking?

Argument: What does the author argue about their topic? This can be a causal relationship, a judgment on the effects of a certain policy, a normative argument for specific interventions, etc.

Evidence: How does the author support their arguments? What empirical evidence do they draw on?

### **Attendance and Participation**

Preparation before class will be key to productive class time. Aside from some short lectures, our class will take the form of a guided discussion in which we analyze the reading and put different perspectives and concepts into dialogue with each other. I encourage students to actively participate and expect students to engage in discussion with respect for other students' contributions.

Attendance is required and any unexcused absences will have a negative effect on your grade. Please contact me directly if you are unable to attend class for any reason covered by university policy, including illness, death in the family, religious observance, university activities etc.

### **Discussion Posts**

Each week of readings will have a corresponding discussion board. Out of 12 discussion boards, students must participate in at least 10. If students participate in more than 10, their lowest grade will be dropped. Discussion boards will be closely related to the week's topic but will also draw on contemporary events and your own experiences. Each week's discussion board will have specific instructions, but will generally be limited to less than one page of writing.

### **Class Presentation**

Each student will choose one set of class readings (between Weeks 2-11) for which they will serve as discussant. As the discussant, you will present major topics or points from the required readings not a detailed summary of each reading. I will post guiding questions with each set of readings that can be used to structure your presentation.

Each student will also prepare either a PowerPoint or a "study guide" for the week they are a discussant. The choice is yours, but the PowerPoint would be particularly useful to present images from the texts or contemporary examples, while the study guide option may be more useful for theory-heavy weeks. Either option should conclude with a list of 3-5 questions for discussion.

### **Writing Assignments**

This course will have three writing assignments that will vary between creative writing, analysis of the readings and an exploration of your own interests. These essays will be 3-5 pages double spaced. Details TBD.

### **Final Paper**

Students will write a 8-12 page double spaced final paper that will engage the course readings and link them to a topic of their own interest. Students could explore a particular case city or neighborhood, or explore another topic related to housing problems and their politics. Details TBD.

## **Grading**

Your grade will be based on the course requirements described above, as follows:

<b>Attendance and Participation</b>	10%
<b>Discussion Posts (10)</b>	20%
<b>Class Presentation</b>	10%
<b>Writing Assignments (3)</b>	30%
<b>Final Paper</b>	30%

## **Grade Conversion**

<b>A</b>	89.5-100
<b>B+</b>	84.5-89.49
<b>B</b>	79.5-84.49
<b>C+</b>	74.5-79.49
<b>C</b>	69.5-74.49
<b>D</b>	59.5-69.49
<b>F</b>	0-59.49

## **Late Assignments**

Late assignments will result in a 10% deduction from your total points for each day past the due date. If, due to extraordinary circumstances, you need an extension on an assignment, please contact me directly before the assignment is due.

## **Plagiarism and Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses. The Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy will apply to all course work. Any form of intellectual dishonesty is subject to disciplinary action. If you have any doubt about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, do not hesitate to consult with me or the Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>. To avoid plagiarism, always reference the materials you have used by adding a footnote or citing your source in text, with a full reference list. Referencing shows that you explore the work of other scholars and engage critically with their work and ideas.

## **Disability-Related Accommodations**

Rutgers University is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students and welcomes students with disabilities into all the University's educational programs. The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers due to disability. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be provided. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at [www.ods.rutgers.edu](http://www.ods.rutgers.edu). You can contact ODS at (848)445-6800 or via email at [dsoffice@echo.rutgers.edu](mailto:dsoffice@echo.rutgers.edu).

## **Rutgers COVID-19 Community Guidelines**

In order to protect the health and wellbeing of all members of the Rutgers-Newark community, masks must be worn by all persons inside campus buildings when in the presence of others, and in buildings in non-private enclosed settings (e.g., common workspaces, workstations, meeting rooms, classrooms, etc.). Masks should securely cover the nose and mouth. Masks must be worn during class meetings. Each day before you arrive on campus or leave your residence hall, you must complete the brief survey on the My Campus Pass symptom checker self-screening app found at: [myRutgers Portal](#).

**Please note:** Course Outline included below is a draft version that will be updated. Please email the instructor regarding any questions about the syllabus.

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

*Note:* course readings are subject to change

### **Week 1: September 7**

#### **Topic: Syllabus Overview**

### **Week 2: September 14**

#### **Introduction: What is Gentrification?**

Yi, K. (2018, December 6). Newark is changing, but it will not become Brooklyn, mayor promises. *NJ Advance Media for NJ.com*.

Danley, S. (2020, September 2). Why Do Low-Income Residents Oppose Development Even When Displacement Risk Is Low? *Shelterforce*.

VIDEO: “Gentrification Explained” by the Urban Displacement Project  
<https://www.urbandisplacement.org/gentrification-explained>

### **Week 3: September 21**

#### **Causes of Gentrification**

Hackworth, J. & Smith, N. (2001). The Changing State of Gentrification. *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie/Journal of Social and Economic Geography*, 92(4), 464–477.

Hyra, D., Fullilove, M., Moulden, D. and Silva, K. (2020). Contextualizing gentrification chaos: the rise of the fifth wave. Working paper, Washington DC: The Metropolitan Policy Center

### **Week 4: September 28**

#### **Effects of Gentrification**

Curran, W. (2018). “Mexicans love red” and other gentrification myths: Displacements and contestations in the gentrification of Pilsen, Chicago, USA. *Urban Studies*, 55(8), 1711–1728.

Stabrowski, F. (2014). New-Build Gentrification and the Everyday Displacement of Polish Immigrant Tenants in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. *Antipode*, 46(3), 794–815.

**Week 5: October 5**

**Gentrification: Positive or Negative?**

**ESSAY #1 DUE**

Davidson, M. (2008). Spoiled mixture: where does state-led positive' gentrification end? *Urban Studies*, 45(12), 2385-2405.

Chaskin, R., & Joseph, M. (2013). “Positive” Gentrification, Social Control and the “Right to the City” in Mixed-Income Communities: Uses and Expectations of Space and Place. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 37(2).

**Week 6: October 12**

**Federal Housing Policy: Public Housing & Urban Renewal**

Rothstein, R. (2017). “Chapter 2: Public Housing, Black Ghettos” in *The color of law: A forgotten history of how our government segregated America*. Liveright Publishing.

Zipp, S. (2013). The Roots and Routes of Urban Renewal, *Journal of Urban History*, 36: 366-391.

**Week 7: October 19**

**Federal Housing Policy: Affordable Housing & HOPE VI**

Goetz, E. G. (2011). Where have all the towers gone? The dismantling of public housing in US cities. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 33(3), 267-287.

Swanstrom, T. (1999). The nonprofitization of United States housing policy: dilemmas of community development. *Community Development Journal*, 34(1), 28-37.

Fields, D. (2015). Contesting the financialization of urban space: Community organizations and the struggle to preserve affordable rental housing in New York City. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 37(2), 144-165.

**Week 8: October 26**

**Excursion: Newark Walking Tour**

**ESSAY #2 DUE**

**Week 9: November 2**

**Urban Politics & Community Development**

Readings TBD

Logan & Molotch

**Week 10: November 9**  
**Gentrification, Race and Ethnicity**

Readings TBD

Goetz, E. (2010). Gentrification in Black and White: The Racial Impact of Public Housing Demolition in American Cities. *Urban Studies* 48(8):1581-1604.

**Week 11: November 16**  
**Resistance to Gentrification**

Readings TBD

Harvey, D. (2008). The right to the city. *New Left Review* 53:23–40.

**Week 12: November 23**  
**Case #1: New York City**

**ESSAY #3 Due**

Readings TBD

**Week 13: November 30**  
**Case #2: Jersey City**

Readings TBD

**Week 14: December 7**  
**Case #3: Newark**

Newman, K. (2004). Newark, decline and avoidance, renaissance and desire: From disinvestment to reinvestment. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 594(1), 174-176.

“Measuring and Explaining Stalled Gentrification in Newark, New Jersey”

**Week 15: December 14**  
**FINAL PAPER DUE**

*Note:* I reserve the right to make changes in the syllabus and course schedule at any time.