

**FALL 2023**  
**URBST 222: INTRODUCTION TO URBAN HOUSING/  
URBST 723: DYNAMICS OF HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS**

Mondays | 6:30 -8:30p | Powdermaker 115

Adjunct Lecturer: Erin Lilli, M/MS.Arch | Email: [elilli@gradcenter.cuny.edu](mailto:elilli@gradcenter.cuny.edu)

Office Hours: By appointment (in-person on Monday or via zoom)

Course Website: <https://urbst222urbst723f23lilli.commons.gc.cuny.edu/>

*Note: This syllabus is a living document and subject to change (you'll be fairly notified)*



Foreground: Hillman Housing buildings at 550 Grand Street (closest) and 530 Grand Street in Cooperative Village in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Author: Joel Raskin, [www.jrDigitalMedia.com](http://www.jrDigitalMedia.com) (CC-BY-SA2.5)

## **I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

With an emphasis on NYC, this class explores the situation of renters and owners in urban areas through a critical lens on race and capitalism. Using a variety of sources (e.g., texts, videos, podcasts), we will evaluate policies and seek to understand the impact of the housing market on neighborhood change and homelessness. This class also considers what different levels of government are doing (and not doing) to ensure that all residents have decent and safe housing. We will focus on a variety of aspects including public housing, rent regulation, mortgage finance, and other public and private programs that play a role in the development of housing in the city. Additionally, we will learn about activism related to affordable housing, tenant advocacy, and homelessness both in the U.S. and abroad.

**How this course is organized:** This course has both undergraduate and graduate students—the graduate students will have different requirements for their assignments and mid-term exam, and additional readings with an emphasis on issues of homelessness. The general weekly format for this course consists of lectures, student-led discussions, in-class activities (some weeks), and reading responses.

Each week you will be responsible for the following as per the class schedule:

- **Attending** lecture and partaking in discussions and in-class activities
- **Completing** course readings/watching videos etc. before class (note: the additional readings for graduate students are optional for undergraduates)
- **Leading** or contributing to class discussions
- **Writing** a response to assigned material

Additionally, you will have a **midterm-exam** and a **final housing paper**.

## II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Gain a foundational understanding of how cities and communities approach the issue of housing and homelessness from a critical assessment of a variety of sources and perspectives.
2. Study historical and contemporary structures of racialized housing in the U.S.
3. Learn about the impacts of neoliberalism and housing financialization and alternative ways of housing.

## III. REQUIRED TEXT

This is an Open Education Resource course, thus there are no required texts to purchase for this course—all course content will be available on the course website. Course readings that are not Open Access will be noted as such and posted to Blackboard (BB).

## IV. GRADING

This course has a total of 100 points you can earn in the following ways:

Assignments/Exam	Due Date	Points	% of Total Grade
Class Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion Lead: Before the start of class on your assigned day (see Course Schedule)</li> <li>• General class participation during discussions and class activities.</li> </ul>	20pts	20%
Weekly Responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mondays @ 5p (see Course Schedule for dates)</li> </ul>	25pts	25%
Mid-term Exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple Choice section: 10/30 (in-class)</li> <li>• Essay section: 11/1 @ 11:59p (take-home)</li> </ul>	25pts	25%
Housing Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic: 11/6</li> <li>• Student Presentations: 12/11 (in-class)</li> <li>• Final Paper: 12/18 @11:59p</li> </ul>	30pts	30%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100pts</b>	<b>100%</b>

NOTE: Acceptance of late work is up to the discretion of the instructor and may result in points lost.

## V. ASSIGNMENTS & EXAM

All assignments are DUE by the date and time listed in the COURSE SCHEDULE which can also be found on the course website.

DISCUSSION LEAD requirements are due before the start of class on your assigned day.

Assignment details and rubrics are on the course website under ASSIGNMENTS menu.

- **Class Participation (20pts)**
  - Students will be responsible for preparing and leading a class discussion. We will assign discussion leads at the start of the term.
  - Students are expected to contribute to discussions about readings/videos etc. even when not leading that week's discussion.
  - Students are expected to attend all lectures and partake in any in-class activities.
  - Class Participation details and rubric can be found on the course website under 'Assignments' menu.
  
- **Weekly Responses (6 @ 4pts each = 24pts + 1 freebie pt = 25pts)**
  - You are required to do any 6 out of the 9 Weekly Responses (you may not do more for extra credit and I will only grade the first 6).
    - NOTE: Feel free to skip the response for the week you are the discussion lead if you like.
  - You will write short responses to of one or more of the week's assigned content (e.g., reading, video, podcast)—this may take the form of responding to a prompt I provide or an open reflection.
  - Graduate students will have slightly different requirements for the response.
  - Response assignments and rubric can be found on the course website under 'Assignments' menu.
  
- **Mid-term Exam (25pts)**
  - Students will complete a midterm exam that is a combination of:
    - In-class multiple choice questions AND
    - Take-home essay questions
  - Graduate students will have their own version of the exam
  
- **Housing Paper + Presentation: (30 pts)**
  - Students will complete a paper focusing with a focus on housing
  - Graduate students will have different requirements for the paper
  - Housing Paper + Presentation details and rubric can be found on the course website under 'Assignments' menu starting on Week 4

## V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

**Email Policy:** I will be available by email ([elilli@gradcenter.cuny.edu](mailto:elilli@gradcenter.cuny.edu)). Questions or issues concerning grades, assignments, or general course information should be submitted through email. In responding to emails, please allow me roughly 24 hours (not counting weekends) for a response. This time will allow me to have enough time to adequately address your issue – or for you to resolve it on your own.

When emailing, please put the class name followed by a short description of the issue in the subject line. For example: “URBST222: Paper Topic”. This will create a reference that we can easily pull back up and, most importantly, it lets me know that the email is class related and, therefore, requires my complete attention.

I will correspond with you via email throughout the semester. **IMPORTANT: Please make sure you are using an email you frequently check (ideally your QC email) and make sure that email is associated with Blackboard—I will send class announcements via Blackboard.** Please do not ignore messages because they may contain important information about due dates or schedule changes. I welcome your emails—feel free to contact me at any time with questions, comments, or concerns about the course.

It is a good idea to get into the habit of corresponding in a courteous manner. Please be sure to do so in your emails. Writing a proper email with the proper salutation (Hello/Dear), subject/details, and especially grammar – is a skill. As with any skill, it takes work and practice to perfect. Use this opportunity to perfect your skill of email correspondence. It is also especially important if you are reaching out to community members for interviews. Feel free to refer to me as Erin or Ms. Lilli—whichever you are more comfortable with.

**Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. The work you do in this course is assumed to be your own. If you reproduce someone else’s work—by using their exact words, rephrasing their words, summarizing their words, or borrowing their idea—you must fully cite your source. This means that you should not take the words or ideas of another person and submit them without acknowledging the original author(s).

According to the [Queens College Academic Integrity Policy](#): “Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person’s ideas, research or writings as your own”. Below are some of the examples:

- Copying another person’s actual words or images without the use of quotation marks and footnotes attributing the words to their source.
- Presenting another person’s ideas or theories in your own words without acknowledging the source.
- Failing to acknowledge collaborators on homework and laboratory assignments.
- Internet plagiarism, including submitting downloaded term papers or parts of term papers, paraphrasing or copying information from the internet without citing the source, or “cutting & pasting” from various sources without proper attribution.

This is not a writing intensive class, but writing will be required. If in doubt about how or when to cite, or if you feel you might be plagiarizing, please refer to [Avoiding Plagiarism](#) or simply ask me- I'm here to help. If you find yourself even remotely tempted to purposefully plagiarize, remember that it is incredibly obvious when you use somebody else's words (seriously, a real human being, me, reads your papers and I can tell when it's not your voice I'm reading).

If I suspect you are plagiarizing your work, I will review the work with you so we can correct it. If problems persist and/or are egregious I may report the incident on the *Queens College Academic Integrity Violation Form*.

### **Accessibility:**

It is important that this course be accessible to all students. In order to receive disability-related (physical, emotional, etc.) academic accommodations students must first be registered with [The Office of Special Services for Students with Disabilities](#) | Ph#: 718-997-5870 | Email: QC.SPSV@qc.cuny.edu

Students who have a documented disability or suspect they may have a disability are invited to set up an appointment with the Center for Student Accessibility Services. If you have already registered with The Office of Special Services for Students with Disabilities, please provide your instructor with the course accommodation form so we may discuss your specific accommodation(s).

Here are some other student services you may find helpful:

[Counseling Services](#) | Email: [CounselingServices@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:CounselingServices@qc.cuny.edu) | Ph#: 718-997-5420 | Crisis Text Line: Text CUNY to 741741

[IT Services](#) | Email: [support@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:support@qc.cuny.edu) | Ph#: 718-997-4444

[Blackboard Help](#) | or reach out to IT Services

[QC Help Desk](#)

[QC Writing Center](#) | Email: [qc.writing.center@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:qc.writing.center@qc.cuny.edu) | Kiely Hall 229

I will do my best to help as much as I can or connect you with the right person/people/department.

### **Communicating Challenges:**

I understand life can be complicated and messy and extenuating circumstances arise. Please utilize the campus counseling services for help and/or communicate to me any concerns you have with your success in this class—as early as possible, be proactive!

If you find that you are struggling with the course material, please contact me. We can set up an office hour to work it out. Bottom line, I want you to do well in this class and have a positive, meaningful experience!

**Course Website:** The syllabus, course schedule, and assignments are located on the publicly available site: <https://urbst222urbst723f23lilli.commons.gc.cuny.edu/>. Course materials (i.e.

readings, videos, lectures, etc.) will be embedded as links in the Course Schedule (non-Open Access readings will be posted to BB).

**Blackboard:** Blackboard will ONLY be used to upload assignments/exam essay questions, post grades, send announcements, and post non-Open Access readings. It is YOUR responsibility to make sure you can access Blackboard and that it uses your correct email—one that you frequently check (see [link](#) for how to change/verify email on BB). Information on how to log on to Blackboard is available [here](#) via QC Helpdesk. Please direct your technical questions about Blackboard access to the IT Service (support@qc.cuny.edu or 718-997-4444). Any class announcements posted to Blackboard will be received by you through the email you have associated with Blackboard.

COURSE SCHEDULE STARTS ON NEXT PAGE...

**VI. COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to change, but you will be informed in advance)**

- All readings/videos/podcasts & lectures will be embedded as links in ‘[Course Schedule](#)’ on the course website
  - Readings that are NOT Open Access will be noted as such and posted to Blackboard
  - Readings marked (**G-only**) are additional readings for graduate students and are not required (i.e., optional) for undergraduates

DATE		TOPIC	CLASS DAY SCHEDULE	ASSIGNMENTS & DISCUSSION LEADERS
<b>WEEK 1</b>	28 August	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Syllabus</li> <li>• Review course website</li> <li>• Assign Discussion Groups</li> <li>• Lecture: <i>Housing in a Free Market</i></li> <li>• In-Class Activity: Short videos on housing crisis</li> </ul>	
<b>WEEK 2</b>	4 September NO CLASS		NO CLASS	
<b>WEEK 3</b>	11 September	Housing & Capitalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lecture: <i>Financialization of Housing</i></li> <li>• Class Discussion</li> <li>• In-Class Activity: Watch excerpts <a href="#">from PUSH</a></li> </ul>	Weekly Response #1 DUE @ 5p  Discussion Leads: Yvonne (UG) Arin (G)
<b>WEEK 4</b>	18 September	Racialized Housing Policies PT. 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lecture: <i>U.S. Housing Policy Pre- and Post War</i></li> <li>• Class Discussion</li> <li>• In-Class Activity: Introduce Final Paper Assignment</li> <li>• In-Class Activity: Short films on New Deal Era Housing</li> </ul>	Reading Response #2 DUE @ 5p  Discussion Leads: Tiffany (G)
<b>WEEK 5</b>	25 September NO CLASS		NO CLASS	

<b>WEEK 6</b>	2 October	Racialized Housing Policies PT. 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lecture: <i>Continued Legacies of Housing Discrimination</i></li> <li>• Class Discussion</li> <li>• In-Class Activity: Listen to second ½ of Reveal Podcast: <a href="#">The red line: Racial disparities in lending [walking in the rain]</a></li> </ul>	<p>Reading Response #3 DUE @ 5p</p> <p>Discussion Leads: Amani (UG) Alex (UG) Jessica (G)</p>
<b>WEEK 7</b>  <b>Monday classes follow Tuesday schedule</b>	10 October TUESDAY	Housing Policy Post-NYC Fiscal Crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lecture: <i>After the NYC Fiscal Crisis: Housing, Homelessness &amp; Making Over NYC</i></li> <li>• Class Discussion</li> <li>• In-Class Activity: TBD</li> </ul>	<p>Reading Response #4 DUE @ 5p</p> <p>Discussion Leads: Theophilus (UG) Henry (UG) Arin (G)</p>
<b>WEEK 8</b>	16 October	Public Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lecture: <i>Public Housing in the U.S. &amp; NYC</i></li> <li>• Class Discussion</li> <li>• In-Class Activity: Watch: <a href="#">Why Do We Have Housing Projects?</a>, PBS Origins</li> </ul>	<p>Reading Response #5 DUE @ 5p</p> <p>Discussion Leads: Melanie (UG) Tiffany (G)</p>
<b>WEEK 9</b>	23 October	REVIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lecture: <i>Zoning &amp; Affordable Housing in NYC</i></li> <li>• REVIEW for mid-term exam</li> </ul>	
<b>WEEK 10</b>	30 October	MID-TERM EXAM	<p>MID-TERM EXAM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple Choice section (in-class)</li> <li>• Essay section (take-home)</li> </ul>	<p>Essay section of Mid-term DUE 11/1 by 11:59p uploaded to Blackboard</p>
<b>WEEK 11</b>	6 November	NYC Affordable Housing Crisis and (re)Zoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Go over exam</li> <li>• Class Discussion</li> <li>• Class Activity: Share paper topics</li> </ul>	<p>Housing Paper Topic DUE</p> <p>Reading Response #6 DUE @ 5p</p> <p>Discussion Leads: Harry (UG)</p>



				Joel (UG) Sondra (G)
<b>WEEK 12</b>	13 November	Gentrification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lecture: <i>Theories of Gentrification</i></li> <li>• Class Discussion</li> <li>• In-Class Activity: Film TBD</li> </ul>	Reading Response #7 DUE @ 5p  Discussion Leads: Sheno (UG) Samantha (UG) Jessica (G)
<b>WEEK 13</b>	20 November	Gentrification (cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lecture: <i>Gentrification: Displacement &amp; Resistance</i></li> <li>• Class Discussion</li> <li>• In-Class Activity: TBD</li> </ul>	Reading Response #8 DUE @ 5p  Discussion Leads: Caudy (UG) Carlos (UG) Sondra (G)
<b>WEEK 14</b>	27 November	Housing as a Right: Movements & Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class Discussion</li> <li>• In-Class Activity: Film TBD</li> <li>• In-Class Activity: Break out groups to discuss your paper topics/ research questions with classmates</li> </ul>	Reading Response #9 DUE @ 5p  Discussion Leads: Jasmine (UG) Naomi (UG) (No Grad Lead this week)  (Optional) Submit draft of paper for high-level feedback
<b>WEEK 15</b>	4 December		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lecture: <i>Sense of Home &amp; Homelessness</i></li> <li>• In-Class Activity: Film TBD</li> </ul>	

<b>WEEK 16</b>	11 December <b>LAST DAY OF CLASS</b>	Presentation Day	<b>STUDENT PRESENTATIONS</b>	Upload PDF of your Presentation to Blackboard by 5p
	<b>18 December</b>	<b>Final Due</b>	<b>FINAL HOUSING PAPER DUE</b>	<b>Final Housing Paper DUE @ 11:59p—upload Word Doc or PDF to Blackboard</b>