

ANTH 4811: Ethnography of Housing

T/TH 2:30-4 OA 2015

Instructor: Melinda Vandenbeld Giles

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Course Description

This course will focus on the role of housing in our everyday lives. In other words, housing in this context is to be understood as the place where we live, whether this is living within the embodied self on the streets of Mumbai, living in a gated community in China, or living in a motel in Toronto. While there has been much research within the field of housing studies, there is increasing need to contextualize housing and housing policy within the ethnographic spaces and places of quotidian lived lives.

The role of this course is to introduce students to housing in a global context in order to better understand the multifaceted, complex cultural, social, political, economic and symbolic processes that merge to create what we call “home”. An analysis of constructs of home will be considered in addition to the contribution ethnography can specifically make to housing studies. This will be followed by considering increasing neoliberal urbanization and resultant effects in terms of housing shortages, migration, homelessness, racialized or ethnic enclaves, global middle-class housing aspirations, the rental market, housing booms and real estate, housing and gender, housing governance and illegality, and housing policy.

Students will be challenged to look beyond the traditional idea of home and housing as permanent sites of dwelling, fixity and security, and instead will be introduced to the idea of homes, houses and places as sites of ambiguity, fluidity and complexity.

Course Texts

1. **Arrival** City: The Final Migration and Our Next World by Doug Saunders
2. All Our **Kin** by Carol Stack
3. Righteous **Dopefiend** by Philippe Bourgois

All other articles will be posted as **PDFs** on D2L.

Course Requirements:

1. Attendance and participation in class discussions. Students are expected to attend lectures and to have readings completed by the assigned dates so they will be able to actively participate in discussions and write weekly essays. Students will be required to write a weekly response due in lecture every Thursday (only hard copies accepted) analyzing, critiquing and providing a response to the readings/films assigned that week and also making comparisons when applicable to other course material. In your weekly written response, I will expect an analysis of the themes discussed in class and evidence of having completed and understood the assigned readings. The 12 weekly responses will be worth 5% each for a total of 60%.
2. A one-page term paper proposal outlining concepts and references to be used. This will be worth 5% of final grade and due on **Feb. 4th**.
3. 8-10 page term paper. You will be required to select a topic of choice related to the ethnography of housing. Please include at minimum 3 academic references. Term paper will be worth 35% of final grade. Please use 12-point Times New Roman font and either AAA or MLA style. Keep in mind that the hard copy of the term paper is due on **March 17th** by the end of lecture. Emailed submissions will not be accepted. If you are unable to hand in your term paper by the end of lecture on March 17th, there will be a deduction of 5% per day until the next lecture on March 19th and then 5% per day deducted until March 25th and 26th. Term papers will no longer be accepted past March 31st.

Evaluation:

Attendance, participation and weekly response: 60%	hard copy due every Thursday (emailed responses will not be accepted)
One-page term paper proposal: 5%	Feb 4 (hard copy due in lecture)
8-10 page term paper: 35%	March 17 (hard copy due in lecture)

Schedule and Readings

WEEK 1:	Introduction to the course: How are we to understand “housing” and how can ethnography contribute to Housing Studies?
Jan 7	Adrian Franklin (1990) “Ethnography and Housing Studies”. Housing Studies 5:2, 92-111 PDF

Jan 9 Nader, Laura. "Ethnography as Theory". *Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 1:1, 211-219. **PDF**

WEEK 2: **What is "home"? Home, Housing and "Domestic" Space.** What is the symbolic significance of "home"? How are we to understand "home" and how can we break down traditional modernist conceptualizations of domestic space as fixed and secure? What are the material, psychological, spiritual, gendered, social, cultural, and political aspects of house and home in the context of the everyday and of human relationships within the "home" space?

Jan 14: Briganti, Chiara and Kathy Mezei Eds. (2012). "Chapter 1: Introduction" (3-15), "Idea of Home" (17-18), "House and Home: Identity, Dichotomy, or Dialectic? (With Special Reference to Mexico)" by David Stea (45-50), "The Idea of a Home: A Kind of Space" by Mary Douglas (50-54), and "Rethinking Place: Thoughts on Spaces of the Home, Absence, Presence, New Connections and New Anxieties" by Linda McDowell (54-58) *In The Domestic Space Reader*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. **PDFs**

Jan 16 **Dopefiend.** Pages 1-7, 48-52 and 60-77.

WEEK 3: **Political Economy of Housing.** A brief history of housing, housing planning, housing shortages and connection of housing to labour.

Jan 21 **Film:** *Metropolis*, a German film by Fritz Lang (1927).

Dopefiend. Pages 148-159.

Jan 23 Jacobs, Jane. "**Introduction**" *In The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1992) (1961). New York: Vintage Books. Pages **3-25**. **PDF**

WEEK 4: **Doing Urban Ethnography and Fieldwork.** What does it mean to do ethnographic housing research? What does fieldwork in urban settings exploring the places where people live look like?

Jan 28 **Dopefiend.** Pages 7-21.

Jan 30 **Kin.** Pages 1-31

Low, Setha. "Claiming Space for an Engaged Anthropology: Spatial Inequality and Social Exclusion." 108th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, December 2–6, 2009. **PDF**

WEEK 5: **Neoliberal Urbanization and Migration.** How has increasing globalization and neoliberal urbanization led to huge shifts in migrating populations and housing density in urban centres? How has this produced political, economic, cultural and symbolic shifts in understandings of housing, home and domestic space?

Feb 4 **Term Paper Proposal Due (hard copy in lecture)**

Film: Highrise: Universe Within (2015) National Film Board of Canada Documentary.

Arrival. Pages 1-36.

Feb 6 **Arrival.** Pages 37-100.

WEEK 6: **Neoliberal Urbanization and Gentrification.** How are the processes of migration and development shifting the landscapes of urban space and housing and creating both opportunity and massive displacement?

Feb 11 Smith, Neil (2002) "New Globalism, New Urbanism: Gentrification as Global Urban Strategy." Antipode. **PDF**

Kelly, Sharon. "The New Normal: The Figure of the Condo Owner in Toronto's Regent Park." City & Society 25:2, 173-194. **PDF**

Feb 13 **Arrival.** Pages 289-331.

WEEK 7: **Cities on the Edge: Illegal Spaces, Transient Places and Urban Governance.** What happens when massive populations move and require

housing? What happens to existing communities? What are the measures of governance, or lack thereof, in terms of housing planning?

Feb 25 Smart, Alan. "Unruly Places: Urban Governance and the Persistence of Illegality in Hong Kong's Urban Squatter Areas." *American Anthropologist* 103: 1 (March 2001), 30-44. **PDF**

Feb 27 **Arrival.** Pages 161-196.

WEEK 8: Racial/Ethnic Enclaves, Fear, and Middle-class Dreams. Within the shifting spaces and places of neoliberal global urbanization and migration is a massive shift in terms of middle-class aspirations and "othering" fears. How are the increasing spaces of global housing shortages, homelessness and precariousness colliding with massive real estate wealth and financialization? How does the middle-class dream of home ownership fit within this increasingly unequal paradigm producing segregation, fear and racialized/segregated housing spaces?

March 3 Low, Setha. "The Edge and the Center: Gated Communities and the Discourse of Urban Fear." *American Anthropologist*. New Series. 103: 1 (March 2001), 45-58. **PDF**

March 5 **Arrival.** Pages 229-288.

WEEK 9: Spectral Housing and Financialization. As people are either forced to stay or forced to move and populations become increasingly crowded, there has been a boom in real estate. While the rates of homeless populations soar, high-end and financed unoccupied condos proliferate, in some cases producing entire ghost cities.

March 10 **Films:** "China's Real Estate Bubble." 60 Minutes.

"China's Empty Cities"

Chad Haines. "Cracks in the Façade: Landscapes of Hope and Desire in Dubai." *In Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global* edited by Ananya Roy and Aihwa Ong. **PDF**

March 12 Christopher Hume. "Are Toronto Condo Towers Slums in the Making?"
https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2012/03/20/hume_are_toronto_condo_towers_slums_in_the_making.html

WEEK 10: Homelessness and Precarious Housing. One of the consequences of massive global inequalities and neoliberal social/political/economic shifts is the number of people and increasingly families who are living in precarious housing. What does this increasing globalized space of housing precariousness look like for those embodying it on a daily basis?

March 17 Term Paper Due (hard copy in lecture)

Film: Home Safe Toronto, (2009). Skyworks Charitable Foundation Documentary.

Vandenbeld Giles, Melinda. "Living in Isolation: Motel Families in Ontario and the Neoliberal Social/Built/Physical Environment". Mothering and the Environment: The Natural, the Social, the Built. Journal of the Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement 2:1 Spring/Summer 2011. **PDF**

March 19 Kin. Pages 124-129.

Dopefiend. Pages 26-45.

WEEK 11: Gender and Housing. Although housing is intrinsically gendered given that the space of the "home" has traditionally been considered a "feminized" place, particular consideration must be given to the specifics of how housing, or lack of housing, creates differential experiences based on gender.

March 24 Mottet, Lisa and John Ohle. "Transitioning Our Shelters: Making Homeless Shelters Safe for Transgender People" Journal of Poverty 10:2, May 2006, 77-101. **PDF**

March 26 Vandenbeld Giles, Melinda (2014). "Making Invisible: The Eradication of "Homeless Mothers" from Public Policy in Ontario, Canada." *In*

Mothering in the Age of Neoliberalism. Bradford, ON: Demeter Press.
PDF

WEEK 12: Applied Urban Sociology: Housing and Public Policy. To conclude the course, we will discuss how ethnography and detailed accounts of everyday lives can lead to more nuanced and applicable housing policy. What are some housing alternatives and possibilities for the future? Students can take some time to discuss their field work and mini ethnographies and what they learned in the process.

March 31 Dopefiend. Pages 309-320.

April 2 <http://www.cwp-csp.ca/poverty/a-human-rights-violation/the-right-to-housing/>

Class Policies

D2L

I will be using D2L to post PDFs of course readings and announcements.

Policy on Extensions

Extensions will only be granted in emergency situations with appropriate documentation. Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day and you will receive 0% after March 31st for the term paper unless prior arrangements have been made.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty (for instance, plagiarism) is a serious offence. Please see the web site: <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/policies/student-related/code-of-student-behaviour-and-disciplinary-procedures/node/1046>. Please keep in mind that I have zero tolerance for any forms of plagiarism.