

IDH 4001H (Seminar 4): Shaping the Future of New York City, Spring 2017

Macaulay Honors College at Baruch College
Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:30 – 3:45 pm
Newman Vertical Campus, Room 11-160
<http://macaulay.cuny.edu/ePortfolios/botein17>

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Course Description:

Seminar 4 seeks to analyze the ongoing interplay of social, economic and political forces that shape the physical form and social dynamics of New York City. By studying the institutional agents of change in the city – federal, state, and city government, public authorities, private sector interests, community boards, and community-based organizations, we will understand and analyze what individuals and institutions do in the process of government, and the ways in which their actions are affected by patterns of access, inequality, and power. I expect that you will apply what you have learned in Seminars 1, 2, and 3 to this course.

Learning objectives for the seminar include:

- Students will use primary sources to understand community institutions, the local economy, and the role of government.
- Students will understand how power differentially affects New York City's people, its built environment, and its institutions.
- Students will begin to engage critically and constructively in key policy debates that shape the future of the city.
- Students will learn about formal and informal institutions that underlie decision making in the city by analyzing historical and contemporary policy issues.
- Students will improve all aspects of their presentation skills.

Each Seminar 4 instructor takes a different approach to the study of cities and has different areas of expertise – thus, every section of the seminar will have a somewhat different orientation while sharing the common description that I have outlined above. In this seminar, we will look first at the broad forces that have shaped the physical, social, and political landscape of New York City, and then focus more narrowly on the very topical issue of public housing – specifically the fate of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). The course thus is divided into three sections. In the

first section, we consider some of the major forces that have shaped American cities, and particularly New York City, since the 20th century. Note that this is a selective examination, as we are constrained by time. In the second section, we examine some key issues facing contemporary New York City, again selectively. In the third section, we look particularly at the issue of public housing and NYCHA.

Course Assignments:

This course has the following assignments and requirements:

1. **Reading reactions and question.** For each of the following classes, you must submit an approximately 250-word (about the length of one double-spaced page) reaction to the assigned reading (*not* a summary of the reading; I want to know if you agreed, didn't agree, didn't understand, wanted more clarification on the issue), as well as a thoughtful question about the reading or the topic. These reading reactions and questions are due via the class website, by noon on the day of class. You can submit them for the following 15 classes: 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19. You are allowed to miss *five* classes, so in total you will be submitting 10 response papers. I will write brief private responses directly on the blog, and will not grade them, but you will receive no credit for your submissions if they are not thoughtful and/or if they do not reflect that you have done the reading.
2. **Personal Housing History.** This assignment, due February 15, requires you to describe your personal housing history. It is described in more detail in a separate handout posted on the class website.
3. **Visit By the People by Feb 26, and submit a reflection by March 8:**
<https://www.cooperhewitt.org/channel/by-the-people/>. This exhibit challenges social and economic inequality in the U.S. Please note that the exhibit closes on February 26! After you visit the exhibit, write a one-page reflection on 1) what most surprised or interested you in the exhibit; and 2) what you think might be relevant to our class project on the future of NYCHA. The short paper is due on March 8. You should also be prepared to discuss the exhibit in class. Please note that Cooper Hewitt is part of the cultural passport program. Students may enter for free once a year with their CUNY IDs or during the pay-what-you-wish Saturday nights.
4. **Research project, website, and presentation.** The class research project, which involves independent and team research on the future of public housing in New York City, will be described in more detail in a separate handout. We will discuss this project in Class 3. The class will participate in shaping the scope of the project. It includes the following components, although we can change the scope slightly as we develop the project:
 1. Observation of a NYCHA development, due March 22 (individual in-class reports and 2-page written description);
 2. Interview of a NYCHA resident, staff member, or business owner serving a NYCHA development, due April 24 (individual in-class reports and 2-page written description); and
 3. Multimedia website and presentation, which will describe and discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the New York City Housing Authority, to be presented at the Seminar 4 Model City Council, which will be held on Saturday and Sunday, May 6 and 7, at the Macaulay Honors College at 35 West 67th Street.

Grading:

I will calculate course grades as follows. Please note that as this course involves a group project, a portion of your grade will be based on a peer assessment completed by the other members of your group. I will provide assessment forms at the end of the semester.

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| ● Reading reactions/questions | 15% |
| ● Personal housing history | 5% |
| ● Reflection on By the People | 10% |
| ● NYCHA observation and interview | 20% |
| ● Final website and presentation | 30% |
| ● Peer assessment | 5% |
| ● Class participation (includes attendance at Seminar
4 Model City Council) | 15% |

Course Requirements:

- Your attendance and participation in class sessions are critical and mandatory. Participation means that you have completed all required readings, are prepared to engage in a serious conversation about the readings, listen to and respond to your colleagues, offer thoughtful commentary, and ask questions. I will take attendance at each class session. I will permit only three absences for any reason. For each absence above three for any reason (excessive lateness also counts as absence), I will reduce your final course grade by one notch (e.g. from B+ to B).
- Turn off cell phone and other devices, including laptops, during class, unless you have discussed with me why you need to leave your phone or laptop on. When we work on website design and some other assignments, you will be asked to bring your laptop to class, but for the most part you should come prepared to take notes with paper and pens.
- Please make sure that you know how to access the course website, as course documents are posted on it. The website is: <http://macaulay.cuny.edu/eportfolios/botein2017>. You should also check it and your Baruch email address on a regular basis, as I will send messages to the class via the website.
- Hand in your work in at the beginning of class. The syllabus specifies if assignments are to be submitted in hard copy or online. If you need an extension, you must communicate with me beforehand and negotiate a mutually acceptable deadline. ***I will not accept unexcused late assignments and you will receive an F for the assignment.***
- Please take advantage of my office hours if you have questions or comments about the course, the readings, or lectures. I am interested in your feedback, and will make myself available to meet with you at a time that accommodates your schedule.

Course Reading:

The reading for the course is available on the ePortfolios site when marked with a “*”, or on the Internet when linked directly from this syllabus.

I also recommend that you read the *New York Times* and your local community newspapers. When you see articles that you think would interest the class, please feel free to give them to me and I will copy and distribute them.

Services for Students with Disabilities:

Baruch College provides reasonable accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities to ensure that no student with a disability is denied the benefits of, is excluded from participation in, or otherwise is subjected to discrimination under the education program or activity operated by the College because of the absence of educational auxiliary aids for students with disabilities. Arrangements for adapting class procedures without compromising course content and standards may take time. Therefore, students who require accommodations or modifications should speak with me as soon as possible. In order to receive services, you must register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities. Documentation is necessary for every disability. For more information concerning services for students with disabilities, please contact Barbara Sirois, Director of the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, Vertical Campus Building, One Bernard Baruch Way, 2nd floor, Room 2-270, 646-312-4590.

Academic Honesty:

Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses. The following definitions are based on the College's Academic Honesty website:

Cheating is the attempted or unauthorized use of materials, information, notes, study aids, devices or communication during an academic exercise. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Copying from another student during an examination or allowing another to copy your work
- Unauthorized collaboration on a take home assignment or examination
- Using unauthorized notes during a closed book examination
- Using unauthorized electronic devices during an examination
- Taking an examination for another student
- Asking or allowing another student to take an examination for you
- Changing a corrected exam and returning it for more credit
- Submitting substantial portions of the same paper to two classes without consulting the second instructor
- Preparing answers or writing notes in a blue book (exam booklet) before an examination
- Allowing others to research and write assigned papers including the use of commercial term paper services

Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person's ideas, research or writing as your own:

- Copying another person's actual words without the use of quotation marks and footnotes (a functional limit is *four or more words* taken from the work of another)
- Presenting another person's ideas or theories in your own words without acknowledging them
- Using information that is not considered common knowledge without acknowledging the source
- Failure to acknowledge collaborators on homework and laboratory assignment

I will give a *failing grade* on any assignment that has been plagiarized. I will make no exceptions. In addition, I am required by College policy to submit a report of suspected academic dishonesty to the Office of the Dean of Students. This report becomes part of your permanent file.

Class Schedule:

Please note that the readings listed below each class are to be completed for that class.

Part I: Shaping Contemporary Cities

Class 1 (1/30/17) – Introductions; course mechanics and overview; intro to website and reading responses

Reading:

- None (first class)

Class 2 (2/1/17) – Urbanism

Film in class: *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (excerpt)

Reading:

- Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Chapter 2, “The uses of sidewalks: safety,” 29-54.*
- E.B. White, *Here is New York*, 25-37 and 54-56.*

Class 3 (2/6/17) – Public housing research project: strategy session; intro to research, vetting sources, mapping

Reading:

- Research project assignment (on eportfolio)
- Kate L. Turabian, *Student's Guide to Writing College Papers*, 4th Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), Chapter 1, “What Researchers Do and How They Think about It,” 11-25.*
- Review the website of the Baruch Human Research Protection Program Office (you do *not* need to take the CITI training): <http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/hrpp/>

Class 4 (2/8/17) – American Cities Today

Reading:

- Thomas J. Sugrue, “The Rise and Fall of Detroit’s Middle Class,” *The New Yorker*, July 22, 2013:
<http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/newsdesk/2013/07/the-rise-and-fall-of-detroits-middle-class.html>
- Jelani Cobb, “Class Notes,” *The New Yorker*, August 31, 2015:
<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/08/31/class-notes-annals-of-education-jelani-cobb>

No class 2/13 – College is closed

Class 5 (2/15/17) – Presentations on personal housing histories (papers due)

No class 2/20 – College is closed

Class 6 (2/22/17) – The Great Migrations

Reading:

- Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), "The Great Migration, 1915-1970," 8-15, and excerpts following Ida Mae Brandon Gladney, pp. 19-35, 95-106, 183-184, 189-192, 242-246, 267-275, 285-292, 315-319, 332-340, 371-378, 385-389, 394-398, 506-511.*

Class 7 (2/27/17) – Federal Housing Policies and the New Deal

Reading:

- Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), "Federal Subsidy and the Suburban Dream: How Washington Changed the American Housing Market," 190-218.*

Class 8 (3/1/17) – Robert Moses and Urban Renewal

Reading:

- Robert A. Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (New York: Vintage, 1974), Introduction, "Wait Until the Evening," 1-21.*
- Samuel Zipp, *Manhattan Projects: The Rise and Fall of Urban Renewal in Cold War New York* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), Introduction, 3-29.*

Class 9 (3/6/17) – Public Housing History, Part I

Film in class: The Pruitt-Igoe Myth

Reading:

- Michael Kimmelman, "Towers of Dreams: One Ended in Nightmare," *New York Times*, January 26, 2012, C1:
<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/26/arts/design/penn-south-and-pruitt-igoe-starkly-differ-housing-plans.html>
- Joseph Heathcott, "Public Housing Stands Alone," in *Public Housing Myths: Perception, Reality, and Social Policy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 31-46.*

Class 10 (3/8/17) – Public Housing History, Part II

Short paper on By the People due

Reading:

- Lawrence J. Vale, *Purging the Poorest: Public Housing and the Design Politics of Twice-Cleared Communities* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2013), Chapter 1, "Public Housing, Design Politics, and Twice-Cleared Communities," 1-38.*

Class 11 (3/13/17) – Fair Housing

Film in class: Fair Housing Justice Center, A Matter of Place

Reading:

- Nikole Hannah-Jones, “Living Apart: How the Government Betrayed a Landmark Civil Rights Law,” *ProPublica*, June 25, 2015:
<https://www.propublica.org/article/living-apart-how-the-government-betrayed-a-landmark-civil-rights-law>
- Zoe Greenberg, “Advocates of Fair Housing Brace for a Tough Four Years,” *New York Times*, January 27, 2017:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/27/realestate/advocates-of-fair-housing-brace-for-a-tough-four-years.html>

Class 12 (3/15/17) – Displacement and Dispossession after the Fiscal Crisis

Reading:

- Joshua Akers, “Contesting Economies of Displacement and Dispossession,” *Metropolitiques*, January 13, 2017: <http://www.metropolitiques.eu/Contesting-Economies-of.html>
- Paul Kiel and Annie Waldman, “The Color of Debt: How Collection Suits Squeeze Black Neighborhoods,” *ProPublica*, October 8, 2015:
<https://www.propublica.org/article/debt-collection-lawsuits-squeeze-black-neighborhoods>

Part II: Topical Issues in Contemporary New York City

Class 13 (3/20/17) – CLASS CANCELLED

Class 14 (3/22/17) – Presentations on NYCHA Site Visits (papers due)

Class 15 (3/27/17) – Homelessness

Reading:

- Coalition for the Homeless, State of the Homeless 2016 (2016):
<http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/state-of-the-homeless-2016/>
- Coalition for the Homeless, Why Are So Many People Homeless?:
<http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/the-catastrophe-of-homelessness/why-are-so-many-people-homeless/>
- Ian Frazier, “Hidden City,” *The New Yorker*, October 28, 2013:
<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/10/28/hidden-city>
- J. David Goodman and Nikita Stewart, “Mayor de Blasio Scrambles to Curb Homelessness After Years of Not Keeping Pace,” *New York Times*, January 13, 2017:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/13/nyregion/mayor-de-blasio-scrambles-to-curb-homelessness-after-years-of-not-keeping-pace.html>

To be covered online: Gentrification and Neighborhood Change

Film: My Brooklyn. To watch this movie go to

http://guides.newman.baruch.cuny.edu/er.php?course_id=30574. The password is botein4001h. If you are viewing it from off campus, you will need to log in with your Baruch network username and password after clicking on the link for the film.

Reading:

- Ronda Kaysen, “Priced Out of a Childhood Home,” *New York Times*, May 13, 2016:
<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/15/realestate/priced-out-of-my-childhood-home.html>
- Kelefa Sanneh, “Is Gentrification Really a Problem?” *The New Yorker*, July 11 and 18, 2016:
<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/07/11/is-gentrification-really-a-problem>

Part III: Public Housing in New York City

Class 16 (3/29/17) – NYCHA Background

Film in Class: For the Living

Reading:

- Nicholas Dagen Bloom and Matthew Gordon Lasner, eds., *Affordable Housing in New York* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), Chapter 3, “Public Housing Towers,” 113-137.*

Class 17 (4/3/17) – NYCHA Background, cont’d

Reading:

- Mark Jacobson, “The Land that Time and Money Forgot,” *New York Magazine*, September 9, 2012: <http://nymag.com/news/features/housing-projects-2012-9/>
- Richard Price, “The Rise and Fall of Public Housing in NYC,” *Guernica*, October 1, 2014: <https://www.guernicamag.com/the-rise-and-fall-of-public-housing-in-nyc/>
- Nicholas Dagen Bloom, “Myth #4: High-Rise Public Housing is Unmanageable,” in *Public Housing Myths: Perception, Reality, and Social Policy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 91-118.*

Class 18 (4/5/17) – NYCHA Funding

Reading:

- Sarah Gastelbaum and Emre Edev, Report on the Fiscal 2017 Preliminary Budget and the Fiscal 2016 Preliminary Mayor’s Management Report – New York City Housing Authority, report to the Council of the City of New York, March 28, 2016:
<http://council.nyc.gov/html/budget/2017/pre/NYCHA.pdf>
- HUD website on Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD):
<https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/rad/>
- NYCHA website on PACT and RAD:
<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/nycha/about/nycha-rad.page>
- New York Housing Conference, Rental Assistance Demonstration Infographic.*
- Ginia Bellafante, “Public Housing, Private Donors,” *New York Times*, February 11, 2016:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/14/nyregion/a-new-charitable-project-the-projects.html>
- Mireya Navarro, “Mayor de Blasio’s Public-Housing Plan to Seek City Aid and More Money From Tenants,” *New York Times*, May 18, 2015:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/19/nyregion/mayor-de-blasio-to-announce-plan-for-shoring-up-new-yorks-public-housing.html>

No class 4/10, 4/12, or 4/17 – Spring Recess

Class 19 (4/19/17) – NYCHA Problems and Solutions

Reading:

- Tom Angotti and Sylvia Morse, Keeping the Public in Public Housing (Hunter College Center for Community Planning and Development, 2014):
<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/ccpd/repository/files/KeepingThePublicInPublicHousing.pdf>
- NYU Furman Center, Building New or Preserving the Old? The Affordable Housing Tradeoffs of Developing on NYCHA Land, May 2015:
http://furmancenter.org/files/NYUFurmanCenter_NYCHABrief_13MAY2015.pdf
- Rachel Cohen, “The RAD-ical Shifts to Public Housing,” *American Prospect*, August 28, 2014:
<http://prospect.org/article/can-private-capital-save-public-housing-tenants-have-their-doubts>
- Alexis Stephens, “Risks vs. Rewards: Inside HUD’s Favorite New Program,” *Next City*, October 9, 2014:
<https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/public-housing-privatized-hud-rad-section-8>

Class 20 (4/20/17) [PLEASE NOTE THAT CLASSES ARE ON A MONDAY SCHEDULE] - Strategy/working session for Model City Council

Class 21 (4/24/17) – Presentations on NYCHA Interviews (papers due)

Class 22 (4/26/17) – Strategy/working session for Model City Council

Class 23 (5/1/17) – Class dry-run presentations and discussion

Class 24 (5/3/17) – Class dry-run presentations and discussion

May 6 and 7: Seminar 4 Model City Council

Class 25 (5/8/17) – TBD

Class 26 (5/10/17) – TBD

Class 27 (5/15/17) – Scavenger Hunt

Class 28 (5/17/17) – Review and wrap-up (final websites due with completed peer assessment forms)