

## Reading Tips and Study Questions CLASS TEN

### Required reading

1. Kennedy, Margrit. 2008. "If Money Rules the World – Who Rules Money?" *Artforum*
2. Peter Marcuse, "Housing Policy and the Myth of the Benevolent State," in Bratt et al., editors, *Critical Perspectives on Housing* (Philadelphia: Temple, 1986).
3. Alex Schwartz, *Housing Policy in the United States* (New York: Routledge, second ed. 2010) – selections.

### Recommended reading

4. Joint Center of Housing Studies, "State of the Nation's Housing 2014" (Harvard)
5. Bipartisan Policy Center, *Housing America's Future: New Directions for National Policy* (Washington, DC: Bipartisan Policy Center, 2013).
6. CHAPA Policy Summary on State Housing and Community Development Policy (2014)
7. "Affordable Housing Draws Middle Class to Inland Cities," *New York Times*, 8/3/14
8. San Francisco Public Press, "San Francisco and New York Affordable Housing Plans Compared" (8/4/14)

### Session overview

This session will introduce Part 3 of the course, the Part that focuses on housing. We look here at broad questions of housing markets and housing policy and the fundamental debates about them. In subsequent sessions, we will go deeper into the fundamentals, such as housing affordability, housing quality, social inclusion, and other ways to evaluate the housing system. We will focus on needs beyond the physical housing itself, including affordability and inclusion, and examine the wide and sometimes confusing array of policies and programs intended to meet those needs.

**Peter Marcuse** is a long-time critic of the current method of distributing a basic need like shelter primarily as a commodity, rather than as a basic right for all. The **Schwartz** book is a good introduction to how the housing system works in the US. Finally, there are three policy studies to give you an idea of the current issues in this subject area, two at a national level and one for Massachusetts. Look through each one, primarily for the kinds of problems and solutions they focus on, and see if you can get a handle on what's going on in a specific issue that you are interested in (e.g., homelessness, foreclosure recovery, etc.).

### **Discussion questions**

1. How exactly does the reality of housing policy and policymaking diverge from what **Marcuse** calls “the myth of the benevolent state,” at least in his view? Pay particular attention to Marcuse’s perspective on whose interests have been. Does the myth help explain why housing need, in particular, manages to often be invisible, as a national issue, but at the same time contentious?
2. What are the key trends that emerge from Schwartz’s summary of housing policy in the US? Does anything surprise you about this field, or is there something you are wondering about that he left out?
3. If you have the chance to review the executive summaries of the housing reports in the recommended readings, how do they differ from each other in the focus of their analysis? What does this suggest to you are the most important housing issues we face?

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