

CourseNo: ARCHA4598\_001\_2012\_3  
Meeting Location: AVERY HALL 408  
Meeting Time: T 11:00A-01:00P

Instructor Information:  
[Gwendolyn Wright](#)

## *Syllabus*

### MODERN HOUSING, PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

A4598

Professor Gwendolyn Wright <gw8@columbia.edu>

Tuesdays, 11-1

408 Avery Hall

Housing has been a prime site for experiments throughout the history of modern architecture. The principal locales, ideas and forms have changed, of course. Today's modernists certainly recognize that innovation does not preclude comfort, delight and familiarity. We no longer promote a single standard. Housing is dwelling, at once a universal human need and a diverse panoply of forms, desires and social conditions. Site plans are critical, as well as a range of services within and beyond a specific site. Design prowess has also extended into new realms like financing, political support and popular media.

This seminar will explore key themes and examples of 20<sup>th</sup>- and 21<sup>st</sup>-century modern housing around the world. The first half of the class will survey and compare a broad range of early examples from iconic social-democratic housing estates of Europe in the 1920s and progressive American enclaves of that era to more recent prefab prototypes in Sweden, barrios in Caracas, dharavi in Mumbai, new suburbs in China, "green" apartment buildings in Malaysia, affordable housing in the US, the mix of market-rate with social housing in Amsterdam. We'll also explore multiple scales from the individual body, the room and the wall to larger composites of housing complexes, production systems, social services, environmental factors and economic challenges.

Design choices are one component of the class. Students in the GSAPP Housing Studio will work with students from other programs and other departments across the university. Research is a parallel theme. Students will choose topics for the second half of the semester and present their initial work, culminating in papers and/or design projects due on **Tuesday Dec 13** at noon. Required weekly readings for group discussion will be available on Seminar Shelf # in the Avery Library Reserve Reading Room.

**Week 1/2 \*\*\*\* (Sept. 11) : What Is 'Modern Housing'?**

**NB: We will schedule a make up for the Sept. 4 class I will have to miss.**

The term "Modern Housing" used to mean canonical European villas and social-democratic workers' dwellings of the 1920s: unadorned white walls, free plans, steel and glass. While that remains an essential foundation in architecture and ambitions, we'll also explore some more recent iconic forms and the social/cultural aspirations of the term today.

Everyone should look over the seminar shelf's range of books on contemporary modern housing, such

as:

Eric Firley and Caroline Stahl, *The Urban Housing Handbook* (NY, 2010)

Alber Ferre and Tihamer Salij, *Total Housing: Alternatives to Urban Sprawl* (Barcelona, 2010)

Hilary French, *New Urban Housing* (New Haven, 2006)

Wolfgang Forster, *Housing in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries* (Munich, 2006)

Josep Luis Mateo, ed., *Global Housing Projects: 25 Buildings since 1980* (Barcelona and New York, 2008)

Annabel Biles and Adam Mornement, *Infill: New Houses for Urban Sites* (London, 2009)

Graham Towers, *At Home in the City: An Introduction to Urban Housing* (Rotterdam, 2005)

Christian Schittich, ed., *High Density Housing* (Basel and Boston, 2004)

**Week 3 (Sept. 18): Meanings of Home, Housing, and Domesticity**

Barbara Miller Land, ed., *Housing and Dwelling: Perspectives on Modern Domestic Architecture* (New York & London, 2007), esp. pp. 50-81

"The Question of Home," *New Formations: A Journal of Culture/Theory/Politics* (Summer 1992)

**Recommended:**

Mary Douglas, "The Idea of Home: A Kind of Space," in Arien Mack, ed., *The Home: A Place in the World* (New York, 1993), 265-81

Marie Aquilino, ed, *Beyond Shelter: Architecture and Human Dignity* (NY, 2011)

David Benjamin, ed., *The Home: Words, Interpretations, Meanings. . .* (1995)

Bridget Franklin, *Housing Transformations: Shaping the Space of Twenty-First Century Living* (London and New York, 2006)

Charles Correa, *Housing and Urbanisation* (New York and London, 2000)

#### **Week 4 (Sept. 25): Looking Backwards and Ahead**

**\*\* Prepare 5-minute presentations on one historical example of a “modern housing” project and its site, seen in cultural, material and environmental terms**

Possible sources:

Hilary French, *Key Urban Housing in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 2008)

Roger Sherwood, *Modern Housing Prototypes* (Cambridge, 1978)

Peter Rowe *Modernity and Housing* (Cambridge, 1993), esp. 19-73, 269-339

Nicholas Bullock and James Reed, *The Movement for Housing Reform in Germany and France* (Cambridge, 1985)

William Blumfield and Blair Ruble, eds., *Russian Housing in the Modern Age* (New York, 1993), esp. 85-170

Lu Junhua, Peter Rowe and Zhang Jie, *Modern Urban Housing in China, 1840-2000* (New York, 2001)

#### **MAKE-UP Week of Oct 2: Modern Standards, Technologies and Ways**

##### **Of Living**

Lucy Bullivant, ed., *Home Front: New Developments in Housing A.D.* vol 73, (July/August 2003), introduction and at least one article

Florian Urban, *Tower and Slab: Histories of Global Mass Housing* (New York And London, 2012), esp. pp. 1-17

Georges Teyssot, “Habis/Habitus/Habitat” in *Present and Futures: Architectures In Cities* (Barcelona, 1996), pp. 114-27

Alina Congreve, *Sustainability in New Housing Development* (London, 2011, TK

Recommended:

Salvador Perez, Arroyo, Rossana Atena and Igor Kevbel, *Emerging Technologies and Housing Prototypes* (Madrid and Amsterdam, 2008)

Graham Towers, *Shelter is Not Enough: Transforming Multi-Storey Housing*

(Bristol, 2000)

Barry Bergdoll and Peter Christensen, eds., *Home Delivery: Fabricating the Modern*

*Dwelling* (New York, 2008)

Ellen Dunham-Jones and June Williamson, *Retrofitting Suburbia* (Hoboken,

2009)

Scott Berkun, *The Myths of Innovation* (Sebastopol, CA, 2010) EBooks

### **Week 5 (Oct. 2). American Housing Reforms**

I'll give an overview of the history.

Gwendolyn Wright, *USA: Modern Architectures in History* (London and

Chicago, 2008), esp. 209-222, 167-80, 249-50 [EBooks]

---, *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America* (Cambridge, 1983)

Richard Plunz, ed., *Housing Form and Public Policy in the United States* (New York

1980), pp. 61-70

Recommended:

Alex F. Schwartz, *Modern Housing Policy in the United States* (New York, 2010)

"Public Housing in the Americas," *Journal of Urban History* 33 (March 2007)

John F. Bauman, et.al., eds., *From the Tenements to the Taylor Homes. . . Urban*

*Housing Policy in 20<sup>th</sup> Century America* (University Park, PA., 2000)

Lawrence J. Vale, *From the Puritans to the Projects: Public Housing and Public*

*Neighbors* (Cambridge, 2000)

Gail Radford, *Modern Housing in America: Policy Struggles in the New Deal*

(Chicago, 1996)

Elizabeth Wood, *The Beautiful Beginnings, the Failure to Learn: Fifty Years of*

*Public Housing in America* (Washington, DC, 1982)

## **Week 6 (Oct. 9). Affordable Housing and the Search for Design Justice**

Julie Eizenberg/KEA, *Architecture Isn't Just for Special Occasions* (New York, 2006)

William Morrish, et.al., *Growing Urban Habitats: Seeking a New Housing Development*

*Model* (San Francisco, 2009), study several examples, esp. 425 on Konyk,

106-11 on Rag Flats, 136-41 on Smith & Others, 178-83 on Pugh &

Scarpa

Recommended:

"Housing in the Americas," *Praxis* 3 (Winter 2002)

Lance Jay Brown et.al., *New Housing/New York Legacy Project* (Barcelona, 2012)  
"Affordable New York," *Bauwelt* (March 2012)

Allison Arieff, "Affordable Housing That Doesn't Scream 'Affordable,'"

*Atlantic Cities* [also in *Place Matters*]

Michael Bell, *iSixteen Houses: Designing the Public's Private House* (New York, 2002)

Sam Davis, *The Architecture of Affordable Housing* (Berkeley, 1995)

## **Weeks 7-12 (Oct. 16- Nov. 20): Student presentations**

We'll choose topics for the next 5 weeks based on what you would like to pursue for research and short presentations, leading up to a research paper (&/or a design or policy proposal as well, if you'd like). You may choose to focus on a particular project or a more general topic, highlighting several specific examples; and a historical or a contemporary framework.

Please give other students (and me!) some basic background reading beforehand. A brief handout with basic information, site plans, etc. is much appreciated. I'll also give you downloads of some of the excellent papers students have done for this seminar during the last two years

### **POSSIBLE TOPICS:**

Social, Economic and Environmental Sustainability

From "Multi-Family" to "Multi-Unit" Dwellings for Transient Cohorts

Promoting Modern Housing in the Popular Media

"Supportive Housing" -- and Full-Service Facilities

Housing the Homeless

Housing Needs Based on Physical Conditions, Age, Ethnic/Racial Groups,

Lifestyle, etc.

Adaptive Reuse and Modern Housing Reform

The Preservation and Adaptation of Public Housing

Live-Work Spaces for Various Kinds of Jobs

Reformatting the Suburbs

Particular Government Programs (eg., in the US: the New Deal, the “Good

Society of the 1960s-70s, state-based programs like New York’s UDC)

Manufactured, Prefabricated, or Transportable Disaster-Relief Housing

Innovative Housing Finance for Innovative Design

**Week 7 (Oct. 16):**

**Week 8 (Oct. 23):**

**Week 9 (Oct. 30):**

**Week 10 (Nov. 6): Holiday**

**Week 11 (Nov. 13):**

**Week 12 (Nov. 20):**

**Week 13 (Nov. 27): Summary and discussion of 21<sup>st</sup>-century Housing**

syllabus
----------