

ARCHITECTURE, ACTIVISM AND ADVOCACY AGAINST HOUSING ALIENATION

Course Instructor:
Adrian Blackwell, adrian.blackwell@uwaterloo.ca

Class hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 11-12:30pm, 1:30-7:00pm CET until the end of September, then 10-12:30pm, 1:30-6:00pm CET
Class location: Canadian Pavilion, Giardini, Venice
Office hours: Schedule by e-mail



ACTIVIST: Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust; ARCHITECT: LGA Architectural Partners with tuf lab, Blackwell, The HIDI Group, Vermeulen Quantity Surveyors; ADVOCATE: Gentrification Tax Action

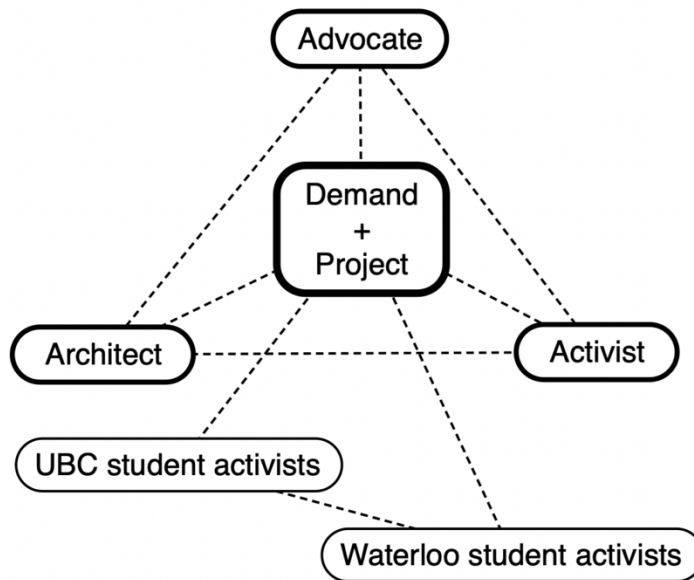
TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

We acknowledge that the School of Architecture is located on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes 10 kilometres on each side of the Grand River.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This is an activist research studio, that will be based in Venice. Its campus will be the Giardini of the 2023 Venice Biennale of Architecture and its studio will be the Canadian Pavilion which is occupied by *Not for Sale!*, an architectural campaign to end housing alienation in Canada. This context gives students a rich selection of materials to study: housing issues in Canada in the Canadian Pavilion, the most current and urgent debates in contemporary architecture in the Biennale named *The Laboratory of the Future*, and an impressive selection of Italian housing projects and housing movements in Venice and in the surrounding areas of Italy.

The studio will introduce students to the concept of housing alienation. Throughout the term, students will collaborate with 10 teams based in Canada on furthering developing the demands and projects that are already underway as part of the *Not for Sale!*, campaign. This will occur through regular virtual meetings with housing activists, architects and advocates with deep experience in housing issues in Canada and through the students own research, which will contribute to the overall campaign.

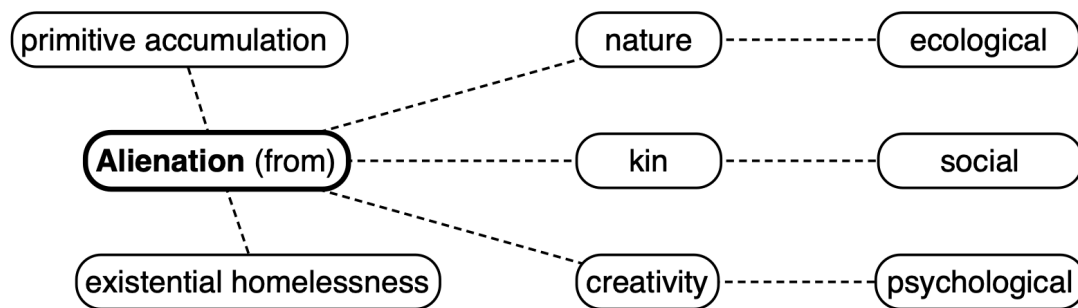


The course is structured around ten demands to create decommodified housing in Canada, which are each focused on a different location and have been developed by local teams. Students will work in small groups doing design, research, and advocacy to contribute to the realization of these demands. The outcomes of the work will be varied ranging from research reports, to events, to design drawings, or popular media.

AAHA Manifesto

End Housing Alienation Now!

Housing in c\ā\ŋ\ā\ɔ\ā is characterized by unaffordability, disrepair, under-housing, precarity, and homelessness. This is housing alienation—the condition of being separated from our fundamental connections to home. It separates us from the land we inhabit, the social world that supports us, and our full creative lives. We are Architects Against Housing Alienation and we believe the current housing system in c\ā\ŋ\ā\ɔ\ā must be abolished!



The transformation of land and homes into profit-generating commodities has caused alienation. This condition began with colonial land dispossession. When European settlers arrived in c\ā\ŋ\ā\ɔ\ā, they began a process that not only violently took land away from Indigenous peoples, but also attacked Indigenous ways of knowing and doing. Through this encounter, land became conceptualized as private property, reserved for the exclusive use of its owner and yet easily exchanged, throwing something as rooted as land into circulation. We use Simoogit Saa Bax Patrick Stewart's backslashes in c\ā\ŋ\ā\ɔ\ā to refer to these originating land divisions and separations. c\ā\ŋ\ā\ɔ\ā is divided by property lines and separated by the drive for profit over the connection to place.

Today, homes are designed to be exchangeable assets. They follow the rules of real estate speculation so that they can store wealth and be easily traded for profit, resulting in environments that are racist, sexist, and classist. Housing alienation disproportionately robs the working class, women, and racialized people of their power to determine for themselves the means of their survival and flourishing. Profit-driven housing production depends on exploitative labour practices and the degradation of the environment through unsustainable construction and resource extraction.

We seek to end housing alienation by rebuilding connections to land, to community, and to creative self-determination. As activists, advocates, and architects, we are working collaboratively to create the political will, economic and policy frameworks, and designs for housing that are socially, ecologically, and creatively empowering for all.

To end housing alienation in c\ā\ŋ\ā\ɔ\ā, we demand:

1. *Land Back (Vancouver): We demand that all land claims for the “crown” be returned to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples as Indigenous land in the form of co-management trusts.*
2. *On the Land Housing (The North): We demand on-the-land, off-grid, nomadic communities for Indigenous women and girls with access to safe, secure, affordable, culturally relevant wrap around support services.*
3. *First Nations Home Building Lodges (Prairies): We demand Home Building Design Lodges tied to housing manufacturing facilities on reserves, to build capacity within communities by grounding the production of houses and their components, in community values, language, and education.*
4. *Reparative Architecture (Toronto): We demand reparative architecture for the Black residents of Toronto’s Little Jamaica who have been displaced or are at the risk of being displaced due to state-led gentrification. We demand the state provide reparations by funding Black-led community land trusts for the creation of affordable housing and commercial space in Little Jamaica.*
5. *A Gentrification Tax (Toronto): We demand a Gentrification Tax to capture the unearned increment of value to build and secure deeply affordable housing within a community land trust.*
6. *Surplus Properties for Housing (Halifax): We demand that all levels of government make available surplus public property assets for the development of affordable housing and the public good that is not for sale—not now and not in the future!*
7. *Intentional Communities for Unhoused People (Toronto): Across Canada, there is a rapidly expanding gap between “living rough” on the street or in self-made encampments, and gaining access to long-term housing. To support unhoused people, cities must use underutilized land to fund and build intentional communities where residents receive services, share community responsibilities, and regain agency to govern space and their lives.*
8. *Collective Ownership (Vancouver): We demand that municipalities incorporate guidelines that prioritize coliving, cooperative and co-housing over speculative real estate development and that credit unions and banks remove roadblocks and create pathways to cooperative financing models.*
9. *Mutual Aid Housing (Montreal): We demand housing for mutual aid in the urban core, where density and supportive programming respond to existing needs, foster community-building, and provide culturally-appropriate support to refugees. A large-scale development will foster cooperative support among people of diverse backgrounds and experiences.*
10. *Ambient Ecosystem Commons (Montreal): We demand a vision and participatory process for housing development that upholds ambient urban ecosystems as a continuously accessible commons necessary for social housing. This process must lead to concrete action to improve the ambient commons.*

COURSE GOALS & LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the studio students will be able to:

- 1) Understand the interdisciplinary nature of housing advocacy
- 2) Develop advocacy documents to further a housing campaign
- 3) Produce activist materials to further a housing campaign
- 4) Design architectural approaches to further a housing campaign
- 5) Understand the complexity of housing alienation

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT:

The course work is divided into 6 parts and a final revision. Each deadline is synced to meetings with the 10 teams working in Canada which each involves a PDF submission that will be graded. The content of the work will be varied and determined through conversation with the 10 teams and the instructor. As each student is involved with 2 groups, project "a" will always refer to the one of projects 1,2,4,9 or 10 you are working on, and project "b" will always refer to the one of projects 3,5,6,7, or 8 you are working on.

P1a is due September 12 and P1b is due September 14 (2 x 5% = 10%)

For this first project, you are expected to produce a short PDF that describes: 1) the key ideas you have understood from the work of the architect/activist/advocate team, 2) your understanding of the work of the UBC students, 3) Some possible ways you could imagine moving forward over the term, and 4) questions you have for the architect/activist/advocate team. The crucial thing at this point is to study the material presented by the Teams and UBC students (parts 1) and 2)) so that you are responding to their work in a respectful, knowledgeable and appreciative way. Make sure you have discussed their work in detail as a group and have reached some consensus on your interpretation. Be ready to present this to the teams in between 5 and 10 minutes as a way to stimulate discussion.

P2a is due October 19 and P2b is due October 24 (2x15%=30%)

For P2 it is expected that you will have undertaken substantial work that follows from the meetings with the teams and discussions with the course instructor. At this stage the work may still be more focused on expanding the research behind the project.

P3a is due November 21 and P3b is due November 23 (2x25%=50%)

For P3 you will be completing the work you started in P2. This final project should involve significant independent creative work that seamlessly builds on the work of the architect/activist/advocate teams and should follow directly from the feedback from the teams. The final scope will be developed in conversation with the course instructor.

Revisions a and b are both due November 29th (2x5%=10%)

In most studios you do not have an opportunity to make revisions, but here because the work is meant to contribute in useful ways to a real campaign for dis-alienated housing, you are expected to revise your work in order to reflect the feedback given by the teams in the final meeting of the term.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Wk	Mo		Title	%
1	Sep	6 Wed	11:00-1:00- Studio - studio introduction and reading discussion	
		7 Thurs	11:00-12:30 - Lecture/discussion on architectural activism with Victor Zagabe, DAP, DMU 1:30-7:00 - Studio meetings Groups 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10	
2		12 Tues	11:00-12:30pm - Campaign Conversation; 1:30-7:00pm- Virtual meetings with Teams 1,2,4,9,10 in c/a/n/a/d/a (45 min. ea.)	P1a 5%
		14 Thurs	11:00-12:30pm - Reading discussion 1; 11:00-7:45pm - Virtual meetings with Teams 3,5,6,7,8 in c/a/n/a/d/a (45 min. ea.)	P1b 5%
3		19 Tues	11:00-12:30pm - Campaign Conversation; 1:30-7:00pm - Studio meetings Groups 1,2,4,9,10	
		21 Thurs	11:00-12:30pm - Reading discussion 2; 1:30-7:00pm - Studio meetings Groups 3,5,6,7,8	
4		26 Tues	11:00-12:30, 1:30-7:00pm - All-studio discussion Groups 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10	
		28 Thurs	11:00-12:30pm - Campaign Conversation; 1:30-7:00pm - Studio meetings Groups 1,2,4,9,10	
5	Oct	3 Tues	10:00-11:30pm - Campaign Conversation; 11:30-12:30, 1:30-6:00pm - Studio meetings Groups 3,5,6,7,8	
		5 Thurs	11:00-12:30pm - Reading discussion 3; 10:00-6:00 - Studio meetings Groups 1,2,4,9,10	
		7-13	Reading-week no classes	
6		17 Tues	10:00-11:30 - Lecture/Discussion on Architecture and Real Estate with Sara Stevens, AAHA OC, SALA UBC; 11:30-6:00- Studio meetings Groups 3,5,6,7,8 with Sara Stevens.	
		19 Thurs	11:00-12:30pm - Campaign Conversation; 11:00-7:00 - Virtual meetings with Teams 1,2,4,9,10 in c/a/n/a/d/a (45 min. ea.)	P2a 15%
7		24 Tues	11:00-12:30pm - Campaign Conversation; 11:00-7:00 - Virtual meetings with Teams 3,5,6,7,8 in c/a/n/a/d/a (45 min. ea.)	P3b 15%
		26 Thurs	10:00-11:30 Lecture/discussion with Sudhir Suri, L'OEUF Architectes, On Ambient Ecosystem Commons 11:30-12:30, 1:30-6:00pm - Studio meetings Groups 1,2,4,9,10 with Sudhir Suri with a special focus on Ecosystemic Thinking	
8		31 Tues	10:00-11:30pm - Campaign Conversation; 11:30-12:30, 1:30-6:00pm - Studio meetings Groups 3,5,6,7,8	
	Nov	2 Thurs	10:00-11:30pm - Reading discussion 4; 11:30-12:30, 1:30-6:00pm - Studio meetings Groups 1,2,4,9,10	
9		7 Tues	10:00-11:30pm - Campaign Conversation; 11:30-12:30, 1:30-6:00pm - Studio meetings Groups 3,5,6,7,8	
		9 Thurs	10:00-12:30, 1:20-6:00pm - All-Studio discussion Groups 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10	
10		14 Tues	10:00-11:30pm - Campaign Conversation; 11:30-12:30, 1:30-6:00pm - Studio meetings Groups 1,2,4,9,10	
		16 Thurs	11:00-12:30pm - Reading discussion 5; 10:00-6:00 Studio meetings Groups 3,5,6,7,8	
11		21 Tues	10:00-12:30pm - Campaign Conversation; 11:00-7:00 - Virtual meetings with Teams in c/a/n/a/d/a (45 min. ea.)	P3a 25%
		23 Thurs	11:00-12:30pm - Reading discussion 6; 11:00-7:00 - Virtual meetings with Teams in c/a/n/a/d/a (45 min. ea.)	P3b 25%
12		28 Tues	10:00-12:30, 1:20-6:00pm - Studio meetings Groups 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10 final studio day	
		29 Wed	5:00pm - Revised projects due in LEARN, revisions are worth 5% for each P3a and P3b.	Rev a+b 10%

COURSE READINGS:

Reading discussions

- 1) David Madden and Peter Marcuse, "Residential Alienation," in *In Defense of Housing: The Politics of Crisis* (London: Verso, 2012).
- 2) Adrian Blackwell and David Fortin, "Introduction" in *claiming the nation state capitalism*, Adrian Blackwell and David Fortin, eds., *Scapegoat: Architecture, Landscape, Political Economy* 12-13 (2020-21): 2-15.
- 3) luugigyoo patrick reid stewart, David Fortin and Adrian Blackwell, "reusing the colonial grammar of claiming the nation state capitalism," in *claiming the nation state capitalism*, Adrian Blackwell and David Fortin, eds., *Scapegoat: Architecture, Landscape, Political Economy* 12-13 (2020-21): 218-229.
- 4) Alex Wilson, "One House Many Nations: Hacking Colonial Systems of Dominance," Lecture, University of Manitoba. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opybdEQ5QiY>
- 5) Matthew Soules, "Introduction" and "Finance Capitalism and Architecture," in *Icebergs, Zombies, and the Ultra Thin: Architecture and Capitalism in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2021), 20-49.
- 6) Ricardo Tranjan, "The housing crisis that isn't" and "Tenant's a Social Class" in *The Tenant Class* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2023), 1-23.

Additional Reading:

Leslie Kern, "Gentrification is about class" in *Gentrification is inevitable and other lies* (Toronto, Between the Lines, 2022). 71-102.

Course Delivery Platforms & Communication

This course will be held in person. *To organize materials and communication outside of weekly in-person sessions, we will use the following:*

LEARN – Official communication, work submission, and grade recording and release.

MS TEAMS – Used for supplementary discussions outside of in-person class time. Students will be added to the course team in the first week of class.

COVID-19 Special Statement

Given the on-going situation around COVID-19, students are to refer to the University of Waterloo's developing information resource page (<https://uwaterloo.ca/coronavirus/>) for up-to-date information on academic updates, health services, important dates, co-op, accommodation rules and other university level responses to COVID-19.

Fair Contingencies for Emergency Remote Teaching

To provide contingency for unforeseen circumstances, the instructor reserves the right to modify course topics and/or assessments and/or weight and/or deadlines with due and fair notice to students. In the event of such challenges, the instructor will work with the Department/Faculty to find reasonable and fair solutions that respect rights and workloads of students, staff, and faculty.

Late Work

Assignments that are handed in late will receive an initial penalty of 5% on the first calendar day late and a 5% penalty per calendar day thereafter. After 5 calendar days, the assignment will receive a 0%.

Only in the case of a justified medical or personal reason will these penalties be waived. For verified health concerns, please discuss this with your instructor before submitting a Verification of Illness Form (VIF) to the Academic Services Coordinator and Associate Director, in the Undergraduate Office. Personal extenuating circumstances need to be communicated to your instructor who will coordinate with the Undergraduate Office as needed. This is not the same as the AccessAbility Accommodations or the short term absence process.

Information on COVID-19 is available [here](#).

Passing Grades

The standard minimum passing grade in this studio course is 60%.

CACB Student Performance Criteria

The BAS/MArch program enables students to achieve the accreditation standards set by the Canadian Architectural Certification Board as described [here](#). This course addresses the CACB criteria and standards that are noted on the Accreditation page of the School of Architecture [website](#).

Mental Health Support

All of us need a support system. We encourage you to seek out mental health supports when they are needed. Please reach out to Campus Wellness (<https://uwaterloo.ca/campus-wellness/>) and Counselling Services (<https://uwaterloo.ca/campus-wellness/counselling-services>).

We understand that these circumstances can be troubling, and you may need to speak with someone for emotional support. Good2Talk (<https://good2talk.ca/>) is a post-secondary student helpline based in Ontario, Canada that is available to all students.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Commitment

The School of Architecture is committed to foster and support equity, diversity and inclusion. If you experience discrimination, micro-aggression, or other forms of racism, sexism, discrimination against 2SLGBTQ+, or disability, there are several pathways available for addressing this:

A) If you feel comfortable bringing this up directly with the faculty, staff or student who has said or done something offensive, we invite you, or a friend, to speak directly with this person. People make mistakes and dealing them directly in the present may be the most effective means of addressing the issue.

B) you can reach out to either the Undergraduate office, Graduate office, or Director (DirectorArchitecture@uwaterloo.ca). If you contact any of these people in confidence, they are bound to preserve your anonymity and follow up on your report.

C) You can choose to report centrally to the Equity Office. The Equity Office can be reached by emailing equity@uwaterloo.ca. More information on the functions and services of the equity office can be found here: <https://uwaterloo.ca/human-rights-equity-inclusion/about/equity-office>.

D) Racial Advocacy for Inclusion, Solidarity and Equity (RAISE) is a student-led Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA) service launching in the Winter 2019 term. RAISE serves to address racism and xenophobia on the University of Waterloo campus with initiatives reflective of RAISE's three pillars of Education and Advocacy, Peer-to-Peer Support, and Community Building. The initiatives include but are not limited to: formal means to report and confront racism, accessible and considerate peer-support, and organization of social events to cultivate both an uplifting and united community. You can report an incident using their online form.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, GRIEVANCE, DISCIPLINE, APPEALS AND NOTE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Academic integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. [Check the Office of Academic Integrity for more information.]

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for their actions. [Check the Office of Academic Integrity for more information.] A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate associate dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71, Student Discipline. For typical penalties, check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties.

In general, you are required to undertake work that you represent as yours by yourself, without copying or adapting work by other, with the exception of work that you derive from others and in turn credit to those others. 'Others' includes AI tools. All work derived from others must be appropriately cited.

AI Policy: Permitted in this Course with Attribution: In this course, students are permitted to use Generative AI Tools like ChatGPT and Midjourney to support their work. In order to maintain academic integrity, students must disclose any AI-generated material they use and properly attribute it. This disclosure should include AI generation whether in whole or part, including images, designs, in-text citations, quotations, and references.

The full extent of images and text passages should be cited. The following statement in assignments may be used to indicate general use of a Generative AI Tool: “The author(s) acknowledges the use of [Generative AI Tool Name], a model developed by [Generative AI Tool Provider], in the preparation of this assignment. The [Generative AI Tool Name] was used in the following way(s) in this assignment: [indicate, e.g. grammatical correction, gathering sources, generating specific images, etc.]”

Caution: When using AI tools, it is important to be aware that the user data supplied might be utilized for training AI models or other purposes. Consequently, there is no guarantee that the information you provide will remain confidential. Instructors and students should exercise caution and avoid sharing any sensitive or private information when using these tools. Examples of such information include personally identifiable information (PII), protected health information (PHI), financial data, intellectual property (IP), and any other data that might be legally protected.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71, Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72, Student Appeals.

Note for students with disabilities: AccessAbility Services, located in Needles Hall, Room 1401, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.