

Richard L. Kirk

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Professional Summary

I am a community-engaged researcher and Ph.D. Candidate in Geography at UCLA. My work addresses questions of displacement, redevelopment, environmental justice, and the shifting role of the state in producing and managing urban inequality. Joining critical urban theory with grounded qualitative methods, I examine how policy, displacement, and grassroots movements shape cities.

Research and Teaching Interests

Urban governance and state-society relations; housing; environmental justice; racial capitalism, urban marginality, and displacement; disability justice and sensory geographies; urban planning and policy; multiculturalism and urban diversity; qualitative methods

Education

University of California, Los Angeles

Los Angeles, CA

Ph.D., Geography

Expected 2027

Dissertation, in progress: “Public housing, the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative, and the future of South Central Los Angeles”

Committee: John Agnew (chair), Juan Herrera, Kelly Kay, José Loya (Dept. of Urban Planning)

Graduate Certificate, Urban Humanities

2024

UCLA Urban Humanities Initiative. Interdisciplinary, year-long certification program integrating interpretive, historical approaches of the humanities with material practices of planning and design to investigate and solve urban problems. Awarded by Dept. of Urban Planning & Dept. of Architecture and Urban Design

University of North Texas

Denton, TX

M.S., Geography, Applied Anthropology Minor

2022

Thesis: “The death and life of great American malls: (Un)spectacular creative destructions, luxury mixed-use developments, and gentrification in Dallas-Fort Worth”

Committee: Ipsita Chatterjee (chair), Waquar Ahmed, Paul Hudak, Andrew Nelson (Dept. of Anthropology)

Publications

Peer-reviewed articles

12. **Kirk, Richard.** (2026). Acceptable harm: Fragmented accountability and the governance of environmental exposure in public housing redevelopment. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 0(0), 1–23. DOI: 10.1177/02637758261457187
11. **Kirk, Richard.** (2026). On the dichotomy between housing justice and environmental justice. *Human Geography*, 0(0), 1–9. DOI: 10.1177/19427786261440885
10. Behm, Derrick, and **Kirk, Richard.** (2026). DeafSpace and the city: Theorizing transgression, identity, and the politics of belonging in urban planning. *Planning Theory*, 0(0), 1–22. DOI: 10.1177/147309522614308
9. **Kirk, Richard.** (2025). Financialization and the reorganization of U.S. public housing. *Human Geography*, 0(0), 1–11. DOI: 10.1177/19427786251396898
8. **Kirk, Richard.** (2025). For a political geography of artificial intelligence: Fighting ghost work, exploitation, and the making of a global digital underclass. *Antipode*. <https://antipodeonline.org/2025/07/30/for-a-political-geography-of-ai/>
7. Ferrer, Alexander, and **Kirk, Richard.** (2025). Urbicidal economics and the racial geographies of triage. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 49(2), 304–321. DOI: 10.1111/1468-2427.13301
6. **Kirk, Richard.** (2024). Neoliberal necropolitics and the global competition for urban dominance. *Geoforum*, 155, 104107. DOI: 10.1016/j.geoforum.2024.104107
5. **Kirk, Richard,** and Behm, Derrick. (2024). Contesting elite capture: Repositioning insurgent planning for mass movements. *Human Geography*, 16(3), 347–352. DOI: 10.1177/19427786241263635
4. **Kirk, Richard.** (2024). Legitimising displacement: Academic discourse, territorial stigmatisation and gentrification. *Urban Studies*, 61(13), 2492–2512. DOI: 10.1177/00420980241235015
3. **Kirk, Richard.** (2024). What Los Angeles tells us about Dracula urbanism. *Urban Geography*, 45(4), 652–670. DOI: 10.1080/02723638.2023.2226551

2. **Kirk, Richard.** (2023). Neoliberal multiculturalism in Dallas: The discursive foundations of diversity-led gentrification in an aspiring U.S. global city. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 55(6), 1392–1407. DOI: 10.1177/0308518X231152258
1. **Kirk, Richard.** (2023). Lifestyle centers, the next boom and bust after shopping malls? Governance, public-private partnerships, and Guy Debord’s spectacle in Dallas-Fort Worth. *Cities*, 133, 104155. DOI: 10.1016/j.cities.2022.104155

Editorially reviewed articles

1. **Kirk, Richard.** (2023). Changing urban fabrics: Thinking through the lopsided city. *Dialogues in Urban Research*, 3(1), 288–292. DOI: 10.1177/27541258231204007

Book chapters

1. Chatterjee, Ipsita, Ahmed, Waquar, and **Kirk, Richard.** (Forthcoming). Fetishism of the commodity: Theorizing value and the “value” of bourgeois, Marxist, and post-Marxist theories. In R. Das, D. Fasenfest, and R. E. Latham (eds.) *The Power of Marxist Thought*, Vol. 2, pp. ——. Studies in Critical Social Sciences book series. Brill.

Book reviews

1. **Kirk, Richard.** (2021). *The Anti-Capitalist Chronicles* by David Harvey. *Human Geography*, 14(1), 151–153. DOI: 10.1177/1942778620979313

Public-facing writing

1. **Kirk, Richard.** (2025). Public housing: A moral case for its dignified revival. *Shelterforce*. <https://shelterforce.org/2025/08/15/public-housing-a-moral-case-for-its-dignified-revival/>

Edited volumes and editorial writing

2. **Kirk, Richard,** and Behm, Derrick. (2026). Editors’ introduction: On margins and junctures. *Critical Planning Journal*, 28(1), 1–5. DOI: 10.5070/CP8.62250
1. Behm, Derrick, and **Kirk, Richard.** (Eds.) (2025). *Critical Planning Journal Vol. 28: Margins and Junctures*.

Books in preparation

1. **Kirk, Richard.** *Façade: How public-private partnerships undermine public and affordable housing*. Proposal submitted to University of California Press.
— *Façade* examines how public-private partnerships (PPPs) have transformed housing policy in the United States over the past three decades. The book argues that federal programs promoted as community revitalization strategies in fact dismantled traditional public housing while embedding private profit-making logics into housing governance. What results is not only the redistribution of resources upward—from communities to private developers—but also a transfer of risk onto the state and

residents themselves. Drawing on research in South Central Los Angeles alongside comparative case studies across the country, the book situates housing policy within broader processes of financialization, privatization, and racial capitalism.

Peer-reviewed articles in preparation

1. **Kirk, Richard.** After struggle, post-politics? Public–private partnerships and public housing in Watts, Los Angeles. For submission to *Antipode*.

Book chapters in preparation

1. Behm, Derrick, and **Kirk, Richard.** Housing Deaf futures: The enabling justice of Deaf enclaves. For inclusion in *Handbook on Urban Policy and Disability*.

Presented Research

Acceptable harm: Fragmented accountability and the governance of environmental exposure in public housing redevelopment. The American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA	2026
Profits and projects: The Choice Neighborhoods Initiative and the transformation of the Jordan Downs public housing projects in Watts. Urban History Association 11 th Biennial Conference: Metropolitan Majorities. Los Angeles, CA	2025
Beyond HOPE VI: A case study of the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative and the redevelopment of the Jordan Downs projects in South Central Los Angeles. International Conference on Urban Affairs, Vancouver, Canada	2025
Legitimising displacement: Academic discourse, territorial stigmatisation and gentrification. The American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting, Honolulu, HI	2024
Legitimising displacement: Academic discourse, territorial stigmatisation and gentrification. Sophos Seminar Series, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA	2024
Neoliberal multiculturalism in Dallas: The discursive foundations of diversity-led gentrification in an aspiring U.S. global city. The American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting, Denver, CO	2023
Multiculturalism as an urban development strategy: A case study of the Dallas International District. Sophos Seminar Series, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA	2023
The decline of great American malls and rise of luxury mixed-use developments: (Un)spectacular creative destruction in the late capitalist American city. Southwest Division of the American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting, Oklahoma City, OK	2021

Conference Sessions Organized

Paper session, Gentrification and ghettoization: Geographies of eviction, banishment, and stigmatization. The American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting, Honolulu, HI (co-organized with Alexander Ferrer, UCLA Geography) 2024

Public Scholarship and Engagement

Organizer and moderator, *Living with Landlords: Rights, Struggles, and Possibilities* 2025
Panel discussion. Presented by *Critical Planning Journal*, UCLA Institute on Inequality and Democracy, and Los Angeles Poverty Department. Hosted at Skid Row History Museum & Archive. Attendance $\approx$ 100 people. Recording of event: [Video Link](#)

Guest, Critically Speaking, hosted by Dr. Therese Markow, “Necropolitics and Inequality” 2025
[\[Podcast Link\]](#)

External guest lecturer, Anthropology 4765/5765 Urban Beings, University of North Texas 2024
Topic: Neoliberal multiculturalism

External guest lecturer, Anthropology 4765/5765 Urban Beings, University of North Texas 2026
Topic: Public housing redevelopment

Research Appointments

Form and Disfunction Lab, UCLA Summer 2026
Graduate Student Researcher (GSR)
Advisor: Jenny Lu
— Conduct interdisciplinary research on DeafSpace and spatial cognition in DeafBlind communities
— Apply methods from geography, cognitive science, and linguistic anthropology
— Analyze embodied and multimodal forms of spatial knowledge and communication

Teaching and Mentorship Experience

University of California, Los Angeles
Teaching Fellow, People and the Earth’s Ecosystems Winter 2026
Teaching Fellow, Introduction to GIS Fall 2025
Teaching Associate, History of European Cities Spring 2025
Teaching Associate, Introduction to GIS Winter 2025
Teaching Associate, People and the Earth’s Ecosystems Fall 2024

Teaching Assistant, Ethnicity in American Cities	Spring 2024
Teaching Assistant, Cultural Geography	Fall 2023, Winter 2024
Grad-to-Grad Mentorship Program	2023–
— Mentored incoming graduate students; held regular meetings to discuss acclimation, progress, and to answer questions about our program	
Mentee: Jordan Steingard	2023–2024
Kofi Siabi	2024–2025
University of North Texas	
Teaching Assistant, Economic Geography	Spring 2022
Teaching Assistant, Culture, Environment and Society	Fall 2020, Fall 2021
Teaching Assistant, Urban Geography	Spring 2020
Grade Potential Tutoring	
Tutor, Geography, Earth Science, Philosophy	2021–2022
— Provided one-on-one and small group instruction for 13 North Texas high school students resulting in letter grade improvements for each	

Academic Service

Co-managing editor, <i>Critical Planning Journal</i>	2024–2026
— Coordinated peer review process, including initial manuscript screening, reviewer selection, and communication with authors	
— Collaborated with editorial team to develop annual theme, solicit submissions, and shape editorial vision	
— Provided developmental editing for selected articles to ensure clarity, scholarly rigor, and alignment with journal scope	
— Oversaw copyediting, layout review, and final publication preparation in partnership with design and production staff	
— Fundraised and promoted journal visibility through academic networks, conference announcements, and social media outreach	
— Partnered with the Skid Row Museum & Archive and the UCLA Luskin Institute on Inequality and Democracy to organize a public event on housing justice in Los Angeles, bringing together tenant-rights lawyers, community activists, scholars, and residents. Event: “Living with Landlords: Rights, Struggles, and Possibilities.”	

Peer review for academic journals

Antipode; Cities; Critical Planning Journal; Dialogues in Urban Research; Geoforum; Housing and Society; Human Geography; International Development Planning Review; Journal of Community Practice; Journal of Race, Ethnicity and the City; Space and Culture

UCLA Geography Graduate Student Association	2023–2024
Vice President & “Brown Bag” Representative	
— Co-organized multiple meetings per quarter to discuss and address departmental matters; organized and facilitated informational gatherings on professional development related topics	

Fellowships, Grants, and Awards

Extramural

Haynes Lindley Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship	2025
The John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation	\$28,600
— Highly competitive fellowship supporting policy-oriented dissertation research in Southern California	
Institute of Human Geography Research Grant	2023
Institute of Human Geography	\$6,000
Geography Bowl Second Prize	2021
Southwest Division of the Association of American Geographers	\$100

Intramural

Howard and Irene Levine Program in Housing and Social Responsibility Research Grant	2025
UCLA Ziman Center for Real Estate	\$3,500
Summer Mentored Research Fellowship	2025
UCLA Division of Graduate Education	\$6,000
Doctoral Travel Grant	2025
UCLA Division of Graduate Education	\$1,000
Summer Fellowship	2024
UCLA Dept. of Geography	\$6,000
Doctoral Travel Grant	2024
UCLA Division of Graduate Education	\$1,000
Summer Fellowship	2023
UCLA Dept. of Geography	\$6,000
UCLA Graduate Division Fellowship	2022–2023
UCLA Division of Graduate Education	\$56,958 in tuition & fees

Voertman-Ardoin Graduate Fellowship	2020–2022
University of North Texas College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences	Increased stipend & reduced TA load
2020 F. Andrew Schoolmaster Award to Outstanding Undergraduate Student	2020
University of North Texas College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences	\$1,000
President's List (4.0 GPA) all semesters	2018–2020
University of North Texas Office of the President	

Academic and Professional Memberships

Urban Affairs Association	2023–
American Association of Geographers	2021–
Queer and Trans Geographies Specialty Group	2023–
Urban Geography Specialty Group	2022–
Council of Texas Archaeologists	2019–2022
Texas Archeological Society	2013–2022
North Texas Archeological Society	2013–2022

Other Experience

Integrated Environmental Solutions	McKinney, TX
Archaeological Field Technician, Geophysical Surveyor	2019–2020
Cova Gran de Santa Linya Archaeological Field School	Sant Llorenç de Montgai, Spain
Research Assistant, Excavator of Mousterian (neanderthal) shelter occupation site	2019
Academic credit awarded by Connecticut College	
Lithic Classification of Jornada Mogollon Archaeological Site	Denton, TX
Research Assistant	2018–2019
University of North Texas	

Software Skills

ArcGIS Pro
 QGIS
 Microsoft Excel
 NVivo
 Adobe Illustrator

Adobe InDesign

Languages

English

American Sign Language

References

John Agnew

Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Geography and Italian

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Dept. of Italian, UCLA

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