During the Cold War, poverty in capitalist countries became a discrediting embarrassment for government officials, a prestigious topic of expertise for social scientists, and a cause for protest by social movements. From Bogotá, Colombia to California’s San Joaquin Valley, some of the most visible manifestations of poverty were housing crises. This talk explores the rise of “aided self-help housing,” a distinctively privatized form of public housing, and traces its circulation within the Americas. Self-help programs illuminate lines of mutual influence between U.S. and Latin American social policy, the midcentury origins of neoliberal practices, and an avenue by which economists rose as policymakers and public intellectuals.

Amy C. Offner is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Pennsylvania.

Contact tuc69990@temple.edu for more details