

FALL 2003

**Department of Urban Studies and Planning
11.401 Introduction to
Housing, Community and Economic Development**

WRITTEN

ASSIGNMENTS

The written requirement for the course consists of three memos each focused on one of the major sections of the course: (1) Setting the Framework (2) Housing and Community Development (3) Economic Development, Work and Jobs. The due dates appear in the Reading list. There will be an "optional" memo on the 4th section of the course (Beyond Housing and Economic Development) for those wanting to enhance their grade (i.e. get it higher.)

Each memo-exercise will provide one or more "cases" from which you will select one on which you will write a memo to your "boss" in response to the central issue framed in the case.

For example you may be the policy advisor to a mayor, a consultant to a community based organization or a program head in a national intermediary. The "case" will frame a situation facing your boss.S(he) will ask you for your advice which will be given in memo form.

The theory here is that the learning you have done in each "section" of the course can be the foundation of a vibrant response. Memo writing is something you are going to have to do - if you haven't already done it. And finding a way of connecting your knowledge acquired in 11.401 to the world of practice is viewed as "a good thing to do."

In each memo you will be asked to write four pages of tight, concise, pointed prose telling "your boss" what you think of the issue (s) he has posed and why. In that response you should consider the following

- 1.the differences among analysis, exhortation and recommendation
- 2.the need to back up general statements with evidence grounded in specifics
- 3.the importance of stating up front the route your memo is taking: i.e. a clear introduction and road map as to what follows
- 4.the value of acknowledging limitations to your approach-if there are any.
- 5.the importance of clarity of recommendation

Any among you who has never written a memo or hasn't a clue what is involved in the above, please see me in advance of the first assignment. I can help!