

Reading Tips and Study Questions CLASS 25

Required reading

Briggs and Thompson, "Deep democracy is not meetings that last forever: Community development next," In *Investing in What Works* (SF: Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, 2012).

Session overview

If possible, please bring a laptop or pad computer to this, our final class session, so you can complete the online course evaluation in the final 15 minutes or so. In the open "Comments" section of the evaluation, we hope you'll tell us about (a) *what topics or issues* in this introductory, survey course you found particularly valuable and what you missed (because we didn't cover it or not enough, in your view); and also (b) *what pedagogical elements* of the course helped you learn or would have helped you learn more effectively—considering the use of class time, readings and videos we chose, number and types of assignments (both major ones and weekly blogging), these study guides, and anything else that influenced your ability to learn well in the course.

Taking stock—and zooming out to reflect

Our course has been about learning from history, making sense of the present day, and projecting into the future—all for the sake of joining idealism and imagination with pragmatic, strategic thinking.

The primary targets (end goals) for all this have been: expanded economic opportunity, more affordable and secure housing, greater political influence for the marginalized, and stronger and more resilient "communities" in multiple senses.

Those have historically defined our faculty group's core, mainly at the neighborhood, city and regional levels, but sometimes with keen attention to national and even global influences and connections. We've talked about and cared about related aims as well, such as health, which are more and more central and compelling, as targets for learning and action, for planners and their partners and publics.

In this final session, we will review major themes and lessons of the course (synthesize) but also look forward—*plan*—as suggested by the questions below.

Discussion questions

We've assigned a very brief reading to jog ideas, not a mechanical review document, plus a simple, preparatory exercise in the form of questions. The exercise is designed to help you synthesize what we've worked on and also imagine

new possibilities.

Please come to class prepared to share your answers to these three Qs:

1. ***If you could invest a million dollars to impact a social problem or seize an opportunity, what would you target, why, and how?***
2. Suppose you had the undivided attention of a small group of “influentials”—key resource providers, decision-makers, or opinion shapers—for an hour next year to talk about any significant problem or opportunity and *how* (at least in broad terms) they should think about it. Alternatively, you could decide that a focus on a group of grassroots stakeholders somewhere would be your chosen audience and focus. ***In any case, whom would they be, what would you talk about, and what major ideas would you emphasize?***
3. Think about one or more ways in which the work we’ve done in the course informed your answers to either question. And look ahead: ***What areas of follow-on learning have you identified, or begun to identify, for yourself—whether for coursework or other kinds of personal or professional development?*** It’s fine if the list is preliminary, but try to think of at least one or more areas (targets)—something that you’re curious about, that you want to *understand* better or more capable of *doing* (or both), that you believe to be significant.

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11.401 Introduction to Housing, Community, and Economic Development
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