

## **URBS 680.01: SENIOR SEMINAR (4 CREDITS)**

**SPRING 2008**

MONDAY 4:10-6:55PM, IN HH 201

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**DR. JASPER RUBIN**

URBAN STUDIES PROGRAM

Office: HSS 137

Office hours: Mon 11 a.m.-12 p.m./Tues 9 a.m. – 10a.m./Or by appt.

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### **Course Description**

The Urban Studies Senior Seminar (URBS 680) is a *practicum* in urban planning and policy that is the required capstone course for graduating URBS majors. The course is open to seniors in Urban Studies only after completing sufficient URBS core requirements (see prerequisites in SFSU Bulletin and below). The course this spring will consist of 5-6 projects (to accommodate up to 20 students in this section) in which students act as consulting teams to real-world clients in the external community. Students will have an opportunity to select from a wide range of projects identified through an RFP process prior to the beginning of the semester. Projects will get adopted by the third week of classes. The class meets in a workshop format, features practitioners from the community as guest speakers, and incorporates hands-on class exercises with practice-oriented readings.

The course is designed to teach students to solve urban planning and policy problems by combining theory, methods, substantive knowledge, and skills in the context of a client-serving project. Students have an opportunity to practice working in a team and prepare a written professional report. The students also have an opportunity to present their findings to a professional jury including the clients and URBS faculty at the end of the semester in order to learn how to deliver a professional report.

URBS 680 is a community service learning (CSL) designated course. This designation provides a procedure for recording the number of hours served each semester on student's Official Transcripts. The benefits of having the hours recorded is tremendous since it helps SFSU students further with future employers or admission to graduate programs.

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### **Student Learning Objectives**

Students who successfully complete the requirements of this course should, at the end of the semester, be able to:

- Apply **theory** (e.g., urban theory) learned through core and disciplinary URBS courses in solving urban planning or policy problems;
- Apply **methods** (e.g., research methods, data analysis, policy analysis) learned through core URBS courses in solving urban planning or policy problems;

- Apply substantive area **knowledge** (e.g., housing, land use, law, health, poverty, sustainability) gained through elective URBS courses in solving urban planning or policy problems;
- Apply **skills** (e.g., web-page construction, PowerPoint presentation, SPSS, GIS, spreadsheets, collaborative team work) learned through URBS courses in solving urban planning and policy problems;
- Combine theory, methods, substantive area knowledge and skills in the context of client-serving projects in the external community;
- Work effectively in a team;
- Communicate findings in the form of a written and oral professional report;

### **Course Prerequisites and Requirements**

Pre-requisites: URBS 400, 492, 493, 480 or 658; URBS 603 and 604 strongly recommended. Advisor approval required.

The course requires the following:

- ✓ Willingness and commitment to work on real-world client projects;
- ✓ Professionalism in interacting with clients and continuing the tradition of productive exchange between the University and the community;
- ✓ Reliability and timeliness in delivering products to clients, to team members, and to the instructor by the due dates; and,
- ✓ Collaborative work in teams of 3-4 in and outside of the classroom.

This course requires a substantial amount of initiative by students and synthesis of knowledge gained as an URBS major. Therefore, students must carefully examine their time commitments for Spring 2008 with their advisors before enrolling in this course. **Advisor approval is required to enroll in URBS 680.**

### **Team Approach**

The entire semester will be focused on producing high quality **professional reports for external clients** by student teams. Presentation of the work to the clients will involve both an oral presentation on **May 5**, and a written report delivered on **May 23**. In addition, there are several written assignments throughout the semester to help students develop the final products (see dates below). Clients may also require meetings and progress reports throughout the semester as needed.

Students will have an opportunity to work in **teams of 3 or 4**, introducing them to the challenges and strengths of team approach to real-world problems. At the end of the semester each student will have an opportunity to assess the nature of their approach (in a one-page individual essay) to the problem as a team and reflect on how they might approach a similar problem in the future.

Students will also be asked to submit a one-page individual essay describing the effectiveness of their teamwork throughout the semester.

The team formation process will take into account student preferences. Following the presentation of projects in class on **Feb 4th** by the clients, each student will have an opportunity to express his/her preference as it relates to his/her career goals and aspirations. I will review student preferences, form teams, and confirm team membership by the third week.

Teams are responsible for developing a scope-of-work in consultation with each client and with the instructor by **March 3<sup>rd</sup>**. This is an important milestone established to ensure the timely completion of subsequent work. Each team will also do some background research about the client's problem and develop a framework in approaching the particular type of problem at hand. Through this process, students will learn to approach new problems and how to best solve them for their future clients.

### **Readings**

The following books will be available at the SFSU Bookstore. All of the articles will be on e-reserve.

### **Recommend Books**

Bardach, Eugene (2005). *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Doyle, Michael and Straus, David (1993) *How To Make Meetings Work* New York: Berkley Books.

Dunlap, Louise. (2007). *Undoing the Silence: Six Tools for Social Change Writing*. Oakland, CA; New Village Press.

Iacofano, Daniel (2001) *Meeting of the Minds: A Guide to Successful Meeting Facilitation*, Publisher: MIG Communications, Berkeley.

Pamuk, Ayse (2006) *Mapping Global Cities: GIS Methods in Urban Analysis*. Redlands, CA: ESRI Press.

## Grading

◆	Timely completion of assignments	10%
	Project preferences essay (2/9)	
	Preliminary work schedule (2/25)	
	Scope of Work (3/3)	
	Brief background/issue paper (3/10)	
◆	PPT presentation of results-to-date (4/23)	10%
◆	PPT Presentation to jury (5/5)	15%
◆	Final Report (5/23)	40%
◆	Self-evaluation of senior seminar experience & evaluation of team effectiveness (5/23)	10%
◆	Class participation	15%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

### Spring 2008 Projects and Clients for Student Consideration

Spring 2008 Senior Seminar students in this section will consider the following seven projects from seven organizations for selection. Project descriptions handout will be distributed on January 28th. Students should review each project prior to hearing presentations by “clients” on February 4<sup>th</sup>.

#### 1. San Francisco Department of Parks and Recreation/San Francisco Planning

##### Department

Project: Research and analysis in support of an update to the Recreation and Open Space Element of the General Plan

Websites: <http://parks.sfgov.org> and <http://www.sfgov.org/planning>

Contacts: Dawn Kamalanathan, Planning Director, SF Recreation and Park. Department

[Dawn.Kamalanathan@sfgov.org](mailto:Dawn.Kamalanathan@sfgov.org); Sue Exline, Planner, San Francisco Planning

Department: [Sue.Exline@sfgov.org](mailto:Sue.Exline@sfgov.org)

#### 2. Mission Economic Development Agency

Project (3 possibilities): Planning and design strategies to improve public safety along 24<sup>th</sup> Street corridor; field research on street vendors; research on Latino-owned businesses.

Website: [www.medasf.org](http://www.medasf.org)

Contact: Jaime Trejo, Policy Analyst [Jtrejo@medaSF.org](mailto:Jtrejo@medaSF.org)

**3. AC Transit**

Project (2): Passenger Perception of Real-time arrival information; customer satisfaction survey

Website: [www.actransit.org](http://www.actransit.org)

Contact: Linda Morris, Transportation Planner [lmorris@actransit.org](mailto:lmorris@actransit.org)

**4. San Francisco Planning Department**

Project: Documentation of cultural contexts in SF's Mission District

Web site: [http://www.sfgov.org/site/planning\\_index.asp](http://www.sfgov.org/site/planning_index.asp)

Contact: Matt Weintraub, City Planner, [Matt.Weintraub@sfgov.org](mailto:Matt.Weintraub@sfgov.org) Historic resources survey team.

**5. SF Municipal Transportation Agency**

Project: Best practices, designs and policies for traffic calming

Web site: [www.sfmta.com](http://www.sfmta.com)

Contact: Mike Sallaberry, Acting Traffic Calming Program Manager [mike.sallaberry@sfmta.com](mailto:mike.sallaberry@sfmta.com)

**6. San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Office of Sophie Maxwell**

Project: Using demographic data to understand neighborhood change

Website: [http://www.sfgov.org/site/bdsupvrs\\_index.asp](http://www.sfgov.org/site/bdsupvrs_index.asp)

Contact: [jon.laau@sfgov.org](mailto:jon.laau@sfgov.org) and [greg.asay@sfgov.org](mailto:greg.asay@sfgov.org)

## Course Outline

### Week 1

**1/28 Introduction to course and classmates.** Student expectations from class. Career goals and aspirations as graduating URBS majors. Examples from previous senior seminar classes.

Handouts: 1) Syllabus; 2) Survey of students; 3) Project Descriptions

### Week 2

#### 2/4 Client presentations

4:10-4:25 **San Francisco Planning Department** (Matt Weintraub)

4:25-4:40 **San Francisco Recreation and Park Department/SF Planning Department** (Dawn Kamalanathan and Sue Exline)

4:40-4:55 **Mission Economic Development Agency** (Jaime Trejo)

4:55-5:15 **Break**

5:15-5:30 **San Francisco Metropolitan Transportation Agency**  
(Mike Sallaberry)

5:30-5:45 **Supervisor Maxwell's Office** (Jon Lau and Greg Asay)  
(Short Break if time allows)

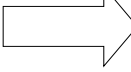
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5:55-6:10 **AC Transit** (Linda Morris)

6:10-6:25 **AC Transit** (Linda Morris)

### **Week 3**

**2/11 Finalizing teams. Developing a scope of work for your client**

 **One page write-up due on project preferences** (first, second, and third choices) and how it relates to your career goals and aspirations (**due on 2/8 via email to [mjrubink@sfsu.edu](mailto:mjrubink@sfsu.edu)**). Teams will convene, will designate a team communications director, and start scheduling first meeting with clients and start working on the project.

Handout: Clients, projects, and teams spreadsheet.

Handouts: 1) Working with clients and teams; 2) Generic dimensions in working with clients

### **Week 4**

**2/18 How to develop a scope of work for your client**

Guest speaker: Joanne Brion, Brion and Associates

Suggested Readings

“A Practical Guide to the Selection, Care, and Feeding of the Consultant” The Planning Center, 1999. (on e-reserve)

Handout: Preparing a scope of work

**Week 5**

**2/25 Holding Productive Meetings, Meeting Facilitation Techniques, Methods of Generating Ideas, Problem-Solving Strategies**

Guest lecture: Jacob Schultz, Bay Area LISC.



Preliminary work schedule due.

Suggested Readings

Iacofano, Management Team Members, pp. 34-37.

Doyle & Straus (1993) “Chapter 16: Solving Problems in Groups: The Tools” pp. 212-255).

Doyle & Straus (1993) “Chapter 1: Why Meetings are Important?” pp. 3-18; “Chapter 2: What Goes Wrong at Meetings?” pp.19-37; Chapter 10: How to Plan your Meeting” pp. 156-158; Chapter 15: How to Put it All Together: The Agenda” pp. 201-211).

Iacofano, Group Dynamics, pp. 67-74.

**Week 6**

**3/3 How to prepare background reports to contextualize your client’s problem**

Suggested Readings

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Bardach (2005) “Smart (Best) Practices” Research: Understanding and Making Use of What Look like Good Ideas from Somewhere Else” pp. 91-105.

Bardach (2005) “Assembling Evidence” pp. 61-88.



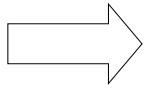
Team scope of work (signed & approved by client) due. Be prepared to discuss your team scope of work with a one page handout (bring enough copies to share with classmates).

Signed Community Service Learning Agreement Form due.

<http://www.sfsu.edu/~ocsl/pdfs/Placement%20Forms/CSL-5.pdf>

**Week 7**

**3/10 Workshop on client projects-Discussion: Use of background information in solving your client's problem.**



Team background reports due. Be prepared to discuss your report in class with a one page bullet list as a handout. (4-5pm)

**Week 8**

**3/17 Preparing Presentation Graphics in PowerPoint**

How to develop an effective oral presentation strategy including using Power Point slides in the PSIRUS computer lab HSS 360 (4-7pm).

Suggested Readings

Doyle & Straus (1993) "Chapter 17: How to Make a Presentation" pp. 256-268).

Iacofano, Closure, 98-106.

**Week 9**

**3/24 No class**– Spring Break

**Week 10 No Class - Cesar Chavez Day**

**3/31**

**Week 11**

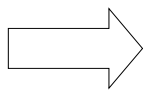
**4/7 Workshop on client projects—Discussion: Implementation of the work plan.**

Be prepared to discuss any challenges and issues you have encountered for collective problem-solving in the classroom. Also be prepared to discuss your preliminary findings, presentation, and report production strategy.

Reminder: Attend *Alumni Panel Discussion* organized by the Urban Studies Program (**April 10**)

**Week 12**

**4/14 no class, Dr. Rubin at conference**

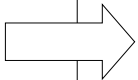


**Week 13**

**4/21 PowerPoint Presentation of results to date (dry run)**

**Week 14**

**4/28 Polishing PowerPoint presentation**  
Computer lab HSS 380 (4:30-7pm)



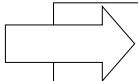
**Week 15**

**5/5 Presentation to a jury** of invited professionals and URBS faculty for evaluation -- practice in communicating results to professionals. This is an excellent opportunity to learn from our guests' comments.

**Week 16**

**5/12** Using presentation feedback to revise written report. Synthesis of what we learned from the presentations. During the week I will be available, by appt., for individual meetings with students about their reports as needed.

**Senior Seminar class and Graduation Party! (Thursday, May 15 5pm).**



**Final report due: May 23.** Please provide 3 copies. I will forward one of the copies to your client, and keep 1 copy on file in the Urban Studies Program Office. Keep a fourth copy for yourself.