

**Graduate Program in Public Policy and Administration**  
**California State University, Sacramento**  
**Fall 2009**

**TO:** Graduate Students, California Land Use Policy, PPA 250  
**FROM:** Peter Detwiler  
**SUBJECT:** MEMO A --- Coping With Your Reading Assignments

OK, I admit it. The volume of your reading assignments looks daunting. Nevertheless, by becoming a critical and efficient reader, you can control the time you spend on this challenge.

A few years ago, I taught a course with Larry Baird who earned his doctorate at USC in the 1960s. Because graduate education is self-education, Larry read continuously to prepare for his oral exams and to research his dissertation. To cope with the volume, he learned a useful technique. I've tried his method and it works. As you read, keep Larry's four questions in mind:

- ***What did the author do?*** What is the author saying? What kind of writing is this piece?
- ***How did the author do it?*** What's the methodology? Was it direct observations, surveys, reanalyzing older data, literature reviews, comparisons, personal experience, narratives?
- ***What did the author find?*** What are the results?
- ***What are the implications?*** Locate the piece within intellectual trends. What does the piece add to our discipline? How does it connect with your other reading?

*When you come to class each week, you should expect me to ask you Larry's questions.*

It also helps to **place the work into context**. Think about *when* the author wrote the piece. What else was going on in society, in the economy, in politics, and in history? When you read about land use, look for the clues that will help you place the author's key points in context.

As you read each assignment, **take notes** to answer these questions for yourself. **Make copies of the form on the next page**. As you take notes, write down other questions that you want to ask your colleagues (or me) about what you've read. You'll find that your collection of notes will help you write your papers for this course.

You won't have time to read every word of every sentence of every paragraph in every assignment. Therefore, you need to become an efficient and critical reader. **Read for the key themes** which most authors place in their introductory paragraphs. Watch for their conclusions. Work to grasp the main thoughts, rather than every single word.

Still struggling? Call me to set up a time early in the semester when we can talk.

**California Land Use Policy**  
**PPA 250 --- Fall 2009**  
**Reading Notes**

**Author:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

• ***What did the author do?*** What is the author saying? What kind of writing is this piece? A journal article? A chapter from a book? A magazine piece?

• ***How did the author do it?*** What's the methodology? Did the author rely on direct observations, surveys, reanalyzing someone else's data, literature reviews, comparisons, personal experience, narratives?

• ***What did the author find?*** What are the results?

• ***What are the implications?*** Locate the piece within intellectual trends. What does this piece add to our discipline? How does it connect with your other reading?

**Graduate Program in Public Policy and Administration  
California State University, Sacramento  
Fall 2009**

**TO:** Graduate Students, California Land Use Policy, PPA 250

**FROM:** Peter Detwiler

**SUBJECT:** MEMO B --- Recommendations For Successful Writing

Because I value clear and lively writing, I want you to know my expectations for your work.

To write well requires hard work and frequent practice. Somerset Maugham once said that “*To write simply is as difficult as to be good.*” I will reward your well-written papers because I know that you have worked hard to organize your thinking and express your thoughts.

**The practical stuff.** The other memos explain the writing assignments in detail. The course syllabus lists the deadlines and reminds you to turn in your papers on the dates they are due. Sometimes you may miss a class because of your job or other obligations. Nevertheless, your paper is still due that Tuesday evening. *If you turn in your paper late, you will lose one letter grade for each day that it is late.* An “A” paper that is due on Tuesday evening becomes a “C” paper by Wednesday. To avoid such a harsh penalty, ask a colleague to deliver your paper.

Thomas Jefferson once wrote to a friend, “*Had I but more time, I would have written less.*” Your goal is to write the best, not the most. A tightly organized, thoughtful paper of four pages is more successful than a seven-page paper that rambles. The other memos explain the maximum lengths. The key is the **quality** of your thought, not the **quantity** of your words.

A former boss edited my work with a sprawling red pen. Bill Kahrl is a good writer and I learned a lot from him, but every assignment came back looking bloody. I resolved never to “bleed” all over someone else’s writing. I will comment on your writing and offer editorial suggestions in **green ink**. As we succeed, you’ll see less green ink on each successive paper.

The CSUS Faculty Senate adopted advisory standards for evaluating students’ writing. I’ve reprinted a modified version at the end of this memo because I want you to know what standards I’ll be using to grade your writing assignments.

**Manuscript format.** The MPPA faculty has adopted the APA manuscript format. You will find the recommendations in Hacker’s *A Pocket Style Manual* (pp. 155-187) with examples (pp. 188-195). Please use one-inch margins, 12-point type, a readable typeface, double-spaced text, page numbers, and a cover page that follows Hacker’s samples (p. 188 & p. 191). You must follow the APA format when you write your book review of *Wye Island* and your essay on California’s suburbs. However, you won’t follow the APA format when writing Group Project reports.

**Questions of style.** Every successful writer develops a *voice* that communicates who you are to your reader. Different styles emerge for different situations: a chatty letter to your family isn't the same as a master's thesis designed to please your review committee. Your group's plan evaluation paper will differ from your own provocative book review. Recognize your audience for each assignment and work in the appropriate style. Here are some other suggestions:

Get professional help. Hacker's *A Pocket Style Manual* is on our reading list for a good reason. It's full of useful advice about writing clearly. Each time you write an assignment, use her "Checklist for Global Revision" at the back of the book. Take her advice and you'll succeed.

Please take advantage of the Writing Center, Room 128, Calaveras Hall (278-6356). The tutors provide individual attention to graduate students' papers, as well as tools for revising and editing them. One MPPA student said that, "the Writing Center has fortified my writing skills and, may even more importantly, my confidence. I am a better writer today than I was when I started the MPPA program." Go to the Writing Center's website: [www.csus.edu/writingcenter/](http://www.csus.edu/writingcenter/)

Use the active voice. Writing is inherently political. Your writing communicates values and manipulates symbols. One of the most serious political problems in a democracy is administrative responsibility. In his essay, "Politics and the English Language," George Orwell compared most government writing to a squid. When threatened by outside forces, the squid hides its position by ejecting a cloud of ink and then flees in reverse at high speed. A writer who habitually avoids the active voice in favor of the passive voice dodges accountability by obscuring who is responsible for the action.

For example, consider the difference between "*Your use permit was denied,*" and "*I denied your use permit.*" Although accurate, the first sentence covers up the identity of the person who denied your permit. The second sentence clearly assigns responsibility. The difference is obvious and the political implication is not trivial.

Hacker tells us to "Prefer active verbs," (§2 on pp. 3-5). Her advice about "active vs. passive voice" (p. 242) helps. If you are still confused, consult Hacker's debate about the passive voice: [http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/pocket4e/subpages\\_language/passive.html](http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/pocket4e/subpages_language/passive.html). Your use of the passive voice will attract more green ink on your papers than any other lapse.

Be direct. Afraid to offend, we temporize. We write, "*The city's goals seem somewhat vague,*" when we really mean, "*The city's goals are vague.*" I look for and appreciate strong opinion even when I disagree with it, if you argue your position clearly. Say what you mean. Be direct. Don't fudge. The best advice comes from Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style*:

Vigorous writing is concise. A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts. This requires not that the writer make all his sentences short, or that he avoid all detail and treat his subject only in outline, but that every word tell.

In her writing manual, Hacker tells us to "Tighten wordy sentences," (§1, pp. 2-3).

**Annoying problems.** Avoid the simple writing errors that distract readers from the important things that you want them to read. You should skim Hacker’s advice about “Grammar,” “Punctuation,” and “Mechanics.”

**Organization.** You write what you think. To write clearly you must think clearly. Sloppy writing suggests confused thinking. Take the time to organize your thoughts so that your writing expresses your views clearly.

Almost every paper that you will write in a PPA course begins with a cover page. Follow the APA format that Hacker explains (p. 185). Give your paper a distinctive title, just like a newspaper headline writer. You’ll find that I appreciate cleverness, even outrageous puns. A strong opening paragraph and an equally strong concluding paragraph signal your reader that you know where you want to go and where you have been. In a short paper, the conclusion often relates back to the opening. For the body of your paper, remember to follow Strunk and White’s advice to “make the paragraph the unit of composition.” Interior headings and bullets help your reader by signaling where you are going, especially when you shift from one point to another. Newspaper editors often insert “sub-heads” for that reason, just as I did in this memo.

**Documentation.** Hacker shows how to use the APA documentation style (§37, pp. 165-185).

**Self-editing.** No one ever gets it right the first time. Drafting, waiting, and then rewriting your work improves your writing. I know that you have lots of other demands on your time: job, family, other courses, community work. Organize your schedule so that you can outline your paper, produce a first draft, and then let it sit for 24 hours before you return to rewrite it. Your concentration to produce a first draft against a tight deadline can keep you from seeing the flaws that you will discover with a second look. Self-editing improves everyone’s writing.

**Your own work.** Study groups can help you cope with the extensive reading assignments. You might collaborate with the other graduate students in your group project’s working group. You can use others’ work to strengthen your own, but be sure to give them proper credit for their ideas and direct quotations. There is nothing wrong with “intellectual recycling” if the final product is your own work and you acknowledge others’ contributions. Nevertheless, the University has a strong policy against academic dishonesty:

Regardless of the means of appropriation, incorporating another’s work into one’s own requires adequate identification and acknowledgment. Plagiarism is doubly unethical because it deprives the author of rightful credit and gives credit to someone who has not earned it.

*University Policy Manual*  
 “Academic Honesty, Policy & Procedures”  
[www.csus.edu/umannual/student/Uma00150.htm](http://www.csus.edu/umannual/student/Uma00150.htm)

**Post it!** Put the next page where you can see it from your computer screen!

## Orwell On Writing Clearly

1. Never use a metaphor, simile or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.
2. Never use a long word where a short one will do.
3. If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.
4. Never use the passive where you can use the active.
5. Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word or jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
6. Break any of these rules sooner than say anything barbarous.

## Standards for Writing in PPA 250

### **A EXCELLENT – A paper in this category**

- Addresses the assignment thoughtfully and analytically, setting a challenging task.
- Displays awareness of and purpose in communicating to an audience.
- Establishes a clearly focused controlling idea.
- Demonstrates coherent and rhetorically sophisticated organization: makes effective connections between ideas.
- Provides clear generalizations with specific detail, compelling support and cogent analysis.
- Cites relevant sources and evaluates their validity, effectively integrating them into text when appropriate.
- Displays superior, consistent control of syntax, sentence variety, word choice & conventional Standard English.

### **B STRONG – A paper in this category**

- Addresses the assignment clearly and analytically, setting a meaningful task.
- Addresses audience needs and expectations.
- Establishes a clearly focused controlling idea.
- Demonstrates clear and coherent organization.
- Provides clear generalizations and effective support and analysis.
- Cites relevant sources, effectively integrating them into text, when appropriate.
- Displays consistent control of syntax, sentence variety, word choice, and conventions of Standard English.

### **C ADEQUATE – A paper in this category**

- Addresses the assignment with some analysis.
- Addresses most audience needs and expectations.
- Establishes a controlling idea.
- Demonstrates adequate organization.
- Provides support for and some analysis of generalizations.
- Cites appropriate sources, integrating them into text.
- Displays adequate control of syntax, sentence variety, word choice, and conventions of Standard English; errors do not slow the reader, impede understanding, or seriously undermine the authority of the writer.

### **D SERIOUSLY FLAWED – A paper in this category**

- Addresses the assignment inadequately.
- Shows insufficient audience awareness.
- Strays from the controlling idea, or the idea is unclear.
- Displays formulaic, random, or confusing organization.
- Lacks generalizations, or provides generalizations with inadequate support or analysis.
- Fails to cite sources or cites and/or integrates them inappropriately.
- Shows deficient control of syntax, word choice & convention of Standard English; errors impede understanding.

### **F FUNDAMENTALLY DEFICIENT – A paper in this category**

- Fails to address assignment.
- Demonstrates a lack of audience awareness.
- Lacks a controlling idea.
- Lacks organization or organizes illogically.
- Displays inability to generalize, analyze, or support ideas.
- Fails to use outside sources or misuses the texts of others.
- Shows inadequate control of syntax, word choice, and conventions of Standard English.

Based on “Advisory Standards For Writing In The Undergraduate Major” (FS 99-25A/CPC), Faculty Senate, California State University, Sacramento, 1999. <http://www.csus.edu/acaf/umannual/advstndrds.htm>

**Graduate Program in Public Policy and Administration  
California State University, Sacramento  
Fall 2009**

**TO:** Graduate Students, California Land Use Policy, PPA 250

**FROM:** Peter Detwiler

**SUBJECT:** MEMO C --- Write A Short Essay on “The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces”

This writing assignment asks you to watch a one-hour video and then write a short essay about it. The assignment occurs early in our semester as a way for me to acquaint you with my writing expectations as much as it is your chance to interpret the work of William H. Whyte.

Before our second class on Tuesday, September 8, you must watch the one-hour videotape of Whyte’s film, “The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces.” The video (#2925) is on reserve for your viewing at the CSUS Library Media Center.

Then you will write a short essay in which you interpret one or two of Whyte’s themes based on your own personal experience. The text of your essay in the APA format will run two pages, maximum, plus the required cover page. This assignment is your chance to say what you think about what Whyte asserts. This assignment is also your chance to show me that you know how to write in the APA format. Your essay is due on **September 8**.

“Holly” Whyte was a great figure in 20th Century city planning. He invented the term *urban sprawl*.<sup>1</sup> While an editor at *Fortune* magazine, Whyte was the first to publish the work of Jane Jacobs. Those articles became the basis for her influential 1961 book, *The Life and Death of Great American Cities*. Later, he wrote the text for the 1969 *Plan for New York City*.

Whyte founded the Street Life Project in the 1970s to observe and record how people really use their public spaces: sidewalks, plazas, parks, and street corners. Instead of just drawing pretty pictures of cities, he applied social science techniques to the design and use of urban space. His results --- time-lapse photography, graphs, charts, and policies --- came from watching people.<sup>2</sup> That simple technique earned Whyte his nickname, “The Observation Man.”<sup>3</sup>

Using the attached worksheet, jot down examples (mostly Manhattan) while you watch Whyte’s film. Later, list examples from your own observations in the Sacramento area.

I want you to connect examples of what you’ve seen around Sacramento to the points that Whyte makes in his film.

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<sup>1</sup> Whyte, William H. (1958) Urban sprawl. *The Exploding Metropolis*. New York: Time, Inc. 133-156.

<sup>2</sup> Whyte, William H. (1988) *City: Rediscovering the Center*. New York, Anchor Books.

<sup>3</sup> Birch, Eugenie L. (1986) The Observation Man. *Planning*. March 1986. 4-8.

While viewing Whyte's film, I want you to look for:

- Relationship to street.
- Sittable space.
- Sun.
- Water.
- Trees.
- Food.
- Triangulation.
- Scale.

Please use Memo B: Recommendations For Successful Paper Writing, from our Course Reader, along with the specific advice in Hacker's *A Pocket Style Manual*.

Here's a checklist of the items that I hope to find in your paper:

- Does your paper have a title page in the APA format? [See Hacker, pp. 188 & 191.]
- Does your paper have a unique (and preferably clever) title?
- Because your text is just two pages (plus the title page), no abstract is needed.
- Does your paper use: [See Hacker, pp. 185-187.]
  - 1" margins?
  - 12-point type?
  - A readable typeface?
  - Double-spaced text?
  - Indented first lines for each paragraph?
  - Page numbers?
  - Headings and subheadings, if appropriate?
  - Citations (if needed) in the appropriate format?
- Does your paper clearly state your thesis in the opening paragraph?
- Is the body of your paper organized into paragraphs that support your thesis?
- Do your supporting paragraphs provide examples to illustrate the arguments?
- Does your paper deliver a strong conclusion?
- Is your writing free of errors that distract the reader from your substantive arguments?
  - Avoid the passive voice. [Hacker, pp. 3-5 & 242.]
  - [http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/pocket4e/subpages\\_language/passive.html](http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/pocket4e/subpages_language/passive.html)
  - Avoid vague antecedents; "this" needs a noun. [Hacker, pp. 34-35.]
  - Use the serial comma. [Hacker, p. 59.]
  - Use apostrophes appropriately. [Hacker, pp. 69-71.]
  - Is it *its* or *it's*? [Hacker, pp. 71, 238.]
  - Punctuation marks go *inside* the quotation marks. [Hacker, pp. 72-73.]
  - Numbers versus figures. [Hacker, pp. 84-85.]
  - Is it *i.e.* or *e.g.*? [Hacker, p. 84.]

**Worksheet: *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces***

| <b><u>Watch for:</u></b> | <b><u>Whyte's<br/>Example</u></b> | <b><u>Your<br/>Example</u></b> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Relationship to street   |                                   |                                |
| Sittable space           |                                   |                                |
| Sun                      |                                   |                                |
| Water                    |                                   |                                |
| Trees                    |                                   |                                |
| Food                     |                                   |                                |
| Triangulation            |                                   |                                |
| Scale                    |                                   |                                |

**Graduate Program in Public Policy and Administration**  
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**Fall 2009**

**TO:** Graduate Students, California Land Use Policy, PPA 250

**FROM:** Peter Detwiler

**SUBJECT:** MEMO D --- Writing A Book Review

Unlike the book reports you wrote as an undergraduate, a book review is a specialized form of the essay. The sociologist Oscar Handlin said that a good essay is a product of experience joined to scholarly thought. It draws together information and illuminates its meaning. Because that's a tall order, here are my suggestions on how to write an effective book review.

**Read it.** Your first step in writing a book review is to read the book. If you bought the book and plan to keep it, write marginal notes to yourself. If it's not your own copy, then scribble your notes on post-its, a writing tablet, or your laptop computer. The goal is to engage the unseen author in dialogue by reacting immediately to interesting or controversial arguments. Jot down your reactions so you can go back and review them later. Even a simple "Ah-ha!" written in the margin will remind you of the startling epiphany that seemed so important at the time. When you disagree, write down a phrase that will allow you to come back to that point. Marking the relevant passages allows you to chase a theme through several chapters. You can return to them and discover how the author used the concept in different settings.

**Organize your thoughts.** Start by re-reading Memo B: Recommendations For Successful Paper Writing, reminding yourself of the need for a title page, an effective title, a consistent theme, a strong opening and closing, and using the paragraph as the unit of composition. Now that you know what you're looking for, open the book and scan your own marginal notes. Look for the themes that impressed you. Make lists of what you liked and what annoyed you. What features stand out now that you've read the whole book? Did the author deliver on the promises made in the introduction? Did the final chapter pull the threads together into a cohesive fabric?

**Identify the main argument.** The first question to ask yourself (and the first point that I'll look for when I read your book review) is: *What is the author trying to make me [the reader] understand?* Find the answer to that question and you are well on your way to writing an effective book review.

**Author's justification.** Explain how the author justifies the book's main argument. In your book review give examples of the evidence that the author uses: accumulated observations, survey research, controlled experiments, logical arguments, appeals to emotion, persuasive anecdotes. Using specific examples to illustrate your explanation shows me that you've read and really understood the book!

**Wider context.** Demonstrate your understanding of the author's main argument by placing it in a wider context. How did historical, political, economic, and social events influence the author's views? How does the author's main argument relate to:

- Major themes in this course.
- Other books or articles that you have read?
- Your own observations and personal experiences?

**What do you think?** Having described and understood the author's argument, now I want to know *your* views. Do you agree or disagree with the author's argument? What counter arguments or contradictory evidence did the author ignore? What faults do you find in the author's arguments? How different would the author's argument be if the book were written today? In other words, how have more recent historical, political, economic, and social events changed the context?

**The specific assignment.** You will review Boyd Gibbons' *Wye Island* this semester. Your book review in the APA format will run five to seven pages, maximum. What theme will you use to organize your book review? By that point in the semester, you'll know the basics of California land use, so you might explore whether Rouse could have been more successful in California in 2009 instead of Maryland in the early 1970s. An alternative theme might be to compare the desire for small town life with the Eastern Shore residents' dread of urban centers. Or, what about the question of social class in making land use decisions.

We will discuss Gibbons' book during our October 20 seminar. That's a great chance to try out your themes before finishing your book review. Use *Wye Island* as a springboard into a wider essay. Your book review is due on **October 27**.

**Graduate Program in Public Policy and Administration**  
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**Fall 2009**

**TO:** Graduate Students, California Land Use Policy, PPA 250

**FROM:** Peter Detwiler

**SUBJECT:** MEMO E --- Your Thoughts on California's Suburbs

Throughout our semester together you have been reading Kenneth Jackson's *Crabgrass Frontier*. You are now familiar with Jackson's explanations of the forces that gave rise to suburban development. Jackson places suburban development in context, showing how historical, economic, technological, and political forces encouraged suburbanization. California did not invent the suburbs, but most Californians live there.

Although popular, California's suburbs are expensive. They use more land than denser patterns of development, they require substantial public capital for infrastructure to reach dispersed residents, they need costly public services to operate and maintain these dispersed public works, and they impose unplanned social costs on communities. Despite these costs, demand persists.

The study of public administration tells us that one way to change policy outcomes is to change the processes or structures of decision-making. How we organize public institutions and how we organize decision-making processes influence the likelihood of certain outcomes. What are your thoughts on how private firms and public agencies make their decisions about land use?

This assignment invites you to write a thoughtful essay about California's suburbs. In five to seven pages, maximum, (plus the obligatory title page) written in the APA format, you will write an essay about the future of suburban development in California.

Take a strong point-of-view and argue it forcefully. For example, your essay could offer your personal prescriptions for changing decision-making processes and political structures to change California's land use. What would you alter? More importantly, what would it take to bring about your recommended changes?

*Don't be shy about expressing your views and don't worry about agreeing with me.*

This assignment is not a book review of Jackson's *Crabgrass Frontier*, although you may return to their work and themes to launch or bolster your arguments. Instead, you will deliver your own thoughts in this analytical essay. You should draw upon your other readings, our class discussions, and your own personal and professional experiences.

Unlike your other writing assignments this semester, there is very little direction about what you should write about. It's your chance to invent your own thesis, and then pull together what you've learned into a culminating essay which is due at our last class meeting on **December 15**.

**Graduate Program in Public Policy and Administration**  
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**Fall 2009**

**TO:** Graduate Students, California Land Use Policy, PPA 250

**FROM:** Peter Detwiler

**SUBJECT:** MEMO F --- Observe, Record, and Interpret (Group Project I)

Your first group project requires you to work successfully with others in observing, recording, and interpreting what you hear and see at along Florin Road. You will use these results in your second group project when you evaluate the same area's underlying general plan. Your experiences will help you during the third group project when you propose changes that will revitalize this area.

Even before the current recession, the stretch of Florin Road from Franklin Boulevard west to 24th Street faced some tough challenges. Rapid development in Elk Grove siphoned away much of Florin Road's former economic activity. Like many other suburban commercial corridors, the Florin Road area couldn't adapt to change. With many auto dealers closed and other properties in decline, property owners, tenants, nearby residents, and public officials are wondering how to revive this area.

**Get into it.** It's time for some role play! Assume that your working group is an interdisciplinary study team that the (nonexistent) CSUS Institute for Regional Studies has sent out to document current conditions along this stretch of Florin Road and the surrounding area. Drawn from several disciplines, the members of your working group will observe, record, and interpret the area. The resulting report and portfolio will identify the location's strengths and weaknesses. In your next two group projects, you'll rely on what you learned from this expedition.

**Get organized.** By September 8 (Week 2), you must form a working group of four students. You will work with this same working group for all three group projects. When you assemble your working group, try to pick at least two people whom you did not know before you started this course. *Pick colleagues with backgrounds unlike your own.* You will discover that this diversity will help your working group during all three group projects.

**Get going.** Everyone's busy! One of the hardest parts of a group project is getting everyone together in the same place at the same time. Exchange telephone numbers and e-mail addresses. Agree on regular meetings (e.g., Tuesday afternoons before class, Saturday mornings). Meet on campus, in an office conference room, or at someone's home. Start seeing yourselves as a cohesive working group. If you start working together regularly in September, you'll save a lot of late nights in October and November. *Don't wait to get going.*

**Get it together.** This assignment is worth 10% of your total grade. In every group project leaders emerge, but sometimes there are shirkers. *Everyone in your group receives the same grade.* This policy intentionally creates peer pressure within your group. Because we all have different talents, one group member may carry a bigger burden on this assignment while others produce less. On the other group projects, the burdens should switch. Some conflicts are inevitable and I prefer that you work them out among yourselves. After all, this assignment simulates a professional working environment. However, if you have a persistent problem that you can't solve, please let me know. I can meet with you individually or with your whole group.

**Observe.** Schedule a time when the entire group can visit the commercial area and the adjacent neighborhoods. Set aside about two hours for your visit. You can travel separately or as a group, but try getting there by Regional Transit. Everyone needs a pen and a note pad. Other recording devices may be useful: sketch pads, graph paper, cameras, and voice recorders.

**Record.** Spend about an hour walking Florin Road from Franklin Boulevard to 24th Street (or from 24th Street to Franklin Boulevard), plus up and down the neighboring streets with your entire group, observing carefully. Take time to look, listen, and absorb your impressions. Divide your time into 10-minute periods. Stop every 10 minutes, so that each of you can record what you have seen. After your observations, find a restaurant or someplace where you can sit down and talk. Compare notes about what you saw and heard. *You will turn in your notes with your report and portfolio.* Here are some questions to ask each other.

**Buildings:**

- What kinds of buildings did you see? What materials are they made of?
- When were they built? Were they all built at the same time?
- What are their current functions?
- Did they have earlier functions? If so, what were they before?
- What condition are they in? How well are they maintained?
- How are they decorated? Signs? Architectural features?
- What visual clues do their owners and users send to observers?  
Signs? Decorations? Graffiti? Doors? Windows? Yards? Sidewalks?
- In the neighborhood, can you tell the rentals from the owner-occupied houses?
- What changes going on? New construction? Remodeling?

**People:**

- How many people did you see? Was the area busy or deserted?
- What were the people doing?
- What kinds of people did you see? Age? Gender? Race?
- What clues did you pick up about them? Clothes? Appearance? Languages?
- Was the area noisy or quiet? Did you hear machines? Animals?
- Would your observations be different if you visited at another time? Another day?

**Place:**

- What is the physical environment like? Trees? Grass? Air quality? Relationship to water? Relationship to views? To light and shadow?

- What kinds of transportation did you see? What are the transportation connections between Florin Road and the rest of our region? Buses? Light rail? Arterials? Freeways?
- What condition are the public works? Street surfaces? Parking lots? On-street parking? Fire hydrants? Street lights? Traffic signals? Official signs? Bus benches? Utility wires?
- How do the buildings relate to the street? What is the “street furniture” like? Who uses it?

**Please remember:** If your group leaves the public sidewalks, you may be on private property. You may be in an area where the residents might be uncomfortable with outsiders. Group members should be aware of their colleagues’ behavior and physical safety. *If you have any reason for concern, leave and return later.*

**Interpret.** By now, your group can reach some initial conclusions about this stretch of Florin Road and its surroundings: its economic activity, how it relates to the natural environment, how it relates to adjacent areas, and how it relates to the rest of the Sacramento metropolitan region.

How would professionals from different disciplines think about this area?

|                  |                        |                         |
|------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Economists?      | Attorneys?             | Psychologists?          |
| Geographers?     | Civil engineers?       | Sociologists?           |
| Historians?      | Political scientists?  | Real estate appraisers? |
| Anthropologists? | Public administrators? | Social workers?         |

What would these professionals emphasize that your group might not have considered?

**Research.** Armed with your own observations, talk to a couple of people who know the area: a neighbor, a real estate agent, a local builder, a planner, a resident, a business owner, a citizen activist, or a local elected official. Do your perceptions match the experts’ views? Did you miss anything? This talk is your “reality check.”

**Your work product.** Your working group will prepare a report and portfolio for your client, the CSUS Institute for Regional Studies. Your work product must include a cover letter addressed to the client. Your cover letter, report, and portfolio will show how well you understand the current conditions in the area that you picked to study. Your written report should be seven to 10 pages, maximum. The report must be professional in appearance and writing style. Your portfolio should contain graphics (e.g., photos, drawings, charts, tables, maps) to complement your written text. Attach the working notes that you took during your observations.

You will turn in your report and portfolio to me on **September 22.**

**Graduate Program in Public Policy and Administration  
California State University, Sacramento  
Fall 2009**

**TO:** Graduate Students, California Land Use Policy, PPA 250

**FROM:** Peter Detwiler

**SUBJECT:** MEMO G --- Plan Evaluation (Group Project II)

How do you know if a plan is any good? In Group Project II, your working group will emulate a planning firm that evaluates a local plan and delivers a professional critique to its client.

**Get into it.** It's time again to role play! Assume that your working group is a planning firm hired by Susan Sorenson, a local attorney. Ms. Sorenson represents an unnamed, confidential client who is interested in the revitalization of Florin Road and the adjacent neighborhood that you observed in your first group project. I will give your working group a letter of engagement from Ms. Sorenson, asking you to evaluate the general plan that applies to this area. She knows that any major land use projects must be consistent with this general plan. Mindful of the *El Toro* and *Camp* decisions, as well as the *Calaveras* case, Sorenson needs your working group to tell her if the general plan is adequate. Sorenson needs to know the plan's strengths and weaknesses so that she can advise her confidential client.

**Get it.** Call or visit the relevant planning department or website to find out how to get a copy of the general plan and its supporting documents.

**Get answers.** The well-regarded book, *California Land Use and Planning Law* suggests plan reviewers organize their responses around 13 questions:

- Is it complete?
- Is it informational, readable, and available to the public?
- Is it internally consistent?
- Is it consistent with state policy?
- Does it cover all territory within its boundaries?
- Is it long-term in perspective?
- Does it address all locally relevant issues?
- Is it current?
- Does it contain the statutory criteria required by state law as demanded by the courts?
- Are the diagrams or maps adequate?
- Does it serve as a yardstick?
- Does it contain an action plan or implementation plan?
- Finally, was it adopted correctly?

I'll give each working group a single-use copy of the relevant pages.

More superb source advice is in OPR's [General Plan Guidelines](http://www.opr.ca.gov/planning/publications/General_Plan_Guidelines_2003.pdf). You can consult this 290-page document online at: [www.opr.ca.gov/planning/publications/General\\_Plan\\_Guidelines\\_2003.pdf](http://www.opr.ca.gov/planning/publications/General_Plan_Guidelines_2003.pdf)

**Get help?** There's nothing wrong --- and there's a lot right --- with talking to practicing planners and others who already know a lot about the area that your group is studying. Learning from others is always part of the professional experience. Plagiarism is not. You must give credit where it is due. Also (for your sake and mine), someone in your working group should write thank-you letters to the people who helped you.

**Your work product.** Your working group will write a report to your client, Ms. Sorenson. Your report will be 10 to 15 pages, maximum. Your work product must include a cover letter addressed to your client. The report must be professional in appearance and writing style. This critical review evaluates the plan's strengths and weaknesses. Your report should include examples from the plan to illustrate your key points, references to the course readings, and allusions to other, outside sources (e.g., interviews with planners or builders, material from other documents). You will turn in this assignment to me on **October 13**.

**Graduate Program in Public Policy and Administration**  
**California State University, Sacramento**  
**Fall 2009**

**TO:** Graduate Students, California Land Use Policy, PPA 250

**FROM:** Peter Detwiler

**SUBJECT:** MEMO H --- Community Reinvestment (Group Project III)

In your third and final group project, imagine that your working group is a consulting firm hired by a client who wants your recommendations on how to re-use the properties along Florin Road and the adjacent neighborhood that you studied in the first two group projects. Your team must propose a set of public and private actions that will lead to the successful re-use of this property.

With my help, your working group will pick your hypothetical client: a local elected official, a prospective developer, a public agency, or a neighborhood association. What you learned in your first two projects will help you focus on your client's particular needs and preferences.

**Prepare.** Any time after October 13 (the deadline for turning in your second group project), your working group must make an appointment to meet with me. We'll spend about a half-hour talking about what your client might want and how to meet those needs.

**Project.** In drafting your recommendations, you should ask yourselves:

- Who is our client?
- What does our client need or want from our group?
- What can we propose to better re-use this area and the adjacent neighborhood?
- Just what does our group mean by "better"?
- What positive assets or processes does the area have that we want to retain and promote?
- What negative features or processes burden the area that we want to change, stop, or divert?
- What private sector actions will make the area better?
- What are the public policies and decisions that will make the area better?
- How can we realistically make these changes happen?
- What features and processes are beyond our control?

Chapter 9, "Implementing the General Plan" in OPR's [General Plan Guidelines](#) can be a source of ideas: [www.opr.ca.gov/planning/publications/General\\_Plan\\_Guidelines\\_2003.pdf](http://www.opr.ca.gov/planning/publications/General_Plan_Guidelines_2003.pdf). In the past, some of the working groups used ideas they found on [www.plannersweb.com](http://www.plannersweb.com) or [www.planetizen.com](http://www.planetizen.com) for suggestions.

Rely on your own observations from your first group project. Use what you learned from your own plan evaluation. It's always a good idea to talk to anyone else who might help. Nevertheless, your proposal must be your own, original work.

**Present.** Your group will prepare a 20-minute presentation that involves all four members. Consider this event as your “pitch” presentation to the client. The members of your working group will dress and act appropriately for the occasion. Your working group will make its presentation on **December 8.**

Begin by introducing your vision for this site to your client. Show your client that you know the site and adjacent neighborhood. Feature its assets and problems. Then explain your proposal and how it can be carried out. Speak directly to your client. Of course, your presentation should be lively, informative, and keep your client’s interest. Your group cannot take more than 20 minutes, including time for questions and answers.

Besides your oral presentation, you should use visual aids. Although fascinating, complicated presentations sometimes crash. Although fancy graphics aren’t necessary, you can use PowerPoint presentations. Be sure to pick appropriate media. Whether you use PowerPoint or story boards, you should hand out copies of your graphics.

A panel of local land use experts will join us for the evening. After all of the groups have presented their proposals, our panelists will give their reactions.

**Portfolio.** At the end of the evening, your group will turn in a portfolio that documents your project. The format is up to you, but in previous years, three-ring binders have been effective. Besides the cover letter to your client, your work product should include a written report (seven to 10 pages, maximum) from your consulting group to your client that emphasizes your vision for the former hospital campus and explains your detailed recommendations.

Here are some questions that your final portfolio should answer:

- What’s your overall vision for re-using this stretch of Florin Road?
- What specific actions do you want to happen?
- Who is responsible for acting?
- What resources will they need?
  - Public capital?
  - Private capital?
- What regulatory decisions must occur?
- What political actions must occur?
- Who needs to review the project?
- Who could block it? Who could promote it?
- What’s a realistic schedule? What are the key deadlines?
- How can the client tell if the project succeeds?

**Graduate Program in Public Policy and Administration**  
**California State University, Sacramento**  
**Fall 2009**

**TO:** Graduate Students, California Land Use Policy, PPA 250

**FROM:** Peter Detwiler

**SUBJECT:** MEMO I --- An Extra Credit Opportunity

Sometimes an assignment just doesn't turn out the way you wanted: your working group flaked out on you, you hated the other reading assignments, or the plan evaluation paper was a real struggle. You may write another book review to earn up to 5% extra credit. Follow the same general instructions as for the required book review (see Memo D).

Pick another book to review. You can review that book alone, or you can write an essay comparing it with the other books we read together this semester. You may submit your extra credit book review any time, but the final deadline is **December 15**, which is also our last class.

Pick a book for your extra credit book review from the 2009 PLANetizen Top 10 Books List at [www.planetizen.com/books/2009](http://www.planetizen.com/books/2009)

Another great source is "The PLANetizen 20," a list called "the all-time 20 top planning titles that every planner should read," at [www.planetizen.com/books/20](http://www.planetizen.com/books/20)

There are some great books on those lists! If none of those books appeals to you, just pick another book (with my approval) to review. For example, if you liked James Howard Kunstler's TED talk that dissected suburban development, you might want to read his *The Geography of Nowhere*. Or to see what defenders of suburbia say, so you could read Robert Bruegmann's *Sprawl: a compact history* or Joel Kotkin's *The City: A Global History*.