

Reading Tips and Study Questions: Session Five

Required reading:

Friedmann, *PPD*, Chapter 3 ("Planning as Social Reform"), pp. 87-136.

Tips and questions

This session will be run as an Ask-the-Expert session in which you should come prepared with questions that will help you complete the assignment. Expert briefings, or phone and online consultations with experts are a common method of preparation for those writing memoranda or preparing briefings for decisionmakers.

In this session, Phil Thompson and Xav Briggs will briefly lecture on the local and federal politics of housing policy, and together with Larry Vale, they will respond to your questions.

The following session (Session 6) consists of student briefings. As such, there will no reading assignment and no study questions on the website, for that session. Your next reading assignment is for Session 7.

1. According to **Friedmann**, what are the central dilemmas of the social reform tradition? Which historical developments and critics most challenged the premises of this tradition, and how?
2. How does the evolution of this tradition in planning shed light on the dilemmas facing BHA planners in the Boston cases we're working on now? Do any of Friedmann's arguments, for example, suggest ways to adapt—in practice—when redevelopment plans don't go as expected?
3. In the history of U.S. city planning, public housing can now be seen as a kind of double experiment. The first experiment (from the 1930s through the 1970s) entailed replacement of "slum" areas by modernist housing blocks; the second experiment (begun in the 1980s and still underway) has entailed replacement of public housing "slums" by more traditional-looking architecture and urbanism. Should the first experiment be entirely repudiated as a failure of planning? Does the second experiment seem more promising? Why has it been so difficult for Americans to embrace the ideals of "social housing" to serve the lowest income groups?