

**17.903**  
**COMMUNITY SERVICE:**  
**Experience and Reflection**  
Fall 2001

Tuesdays 3:00 – 4:30 in 38-166

Class sessions:	September 11	November 13
	September 25	December 4
	October 16	December 11
	October 30	

Instructors:	Tobie Weiner	Jeremy Pressman
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<http://web.mit.edu/17.901>

### **Description of Course**

If you've always wanted to work as a volunteer in the Boston/Cambridge area but didn't know where to begin TAKE THIS CLASS. In this seminar, students combine experiential learning with reading, writing and reflection on urban politics and policy. Work as a volunteer in a community service agency or an advocacy group and receive MIT credit. Tutor kids, teens or adults; cook dinner for guests in a shelter; help design community programs for youth; conduct research on nutrition, hunger and homelessness policies; volunteer with the elderly; record books for the blind; teach a dance or art class; or do something about race relations, poverty, human rights issues, or the environment. Tell us what you want to do, and we'll do our best to find a placement for you.

We'll meet seven times for 1 1/2 hours during the semester to discuss your placement, politics, policy, and other issues. We examine contemporary urban issues including race, diversity, education reform, and/or health care policy. Each semester the topics and the readings are different. Last semester, we concentrated on urban economic issues, domestic partnership laws, the upcoming national presidential election, and welfare policy. The students in the class choose the central issues on which we focus at the orientation session.

### **Requirements for the class**

- 1) *Participation in a community service agency or advocacy group of your choice*

(verified by on-site supervisor). Students must work between 4-9 hours per week throughout the semester, depending upon units. (4-6 hours required for 6 units of credit, 7-9 hours required for 9 units of credit)

- 2) *Two letters from supervisor.* The first describes your duties and your schedule (due October 3) The second evaluates your work. (due at last seminar session.)
- 3) *Your evaluation of the seminar and of your placement* (due at last seminar session).
- 4) *Participation in the seven seminar sessions and a reception dinner.* You should be prepared to discuss your placement as well as the assigned readings. Each student is expected to read selections from four short reading packets (total pages for the semester: 80-100).
- 5) *Five writing assignments.* (total pages - approximately 10-15)
  - A. *Three short response papers* to the assigned readings for three of the class sessions (1-2 pages each). These papers are turned in at the beginning of each of the sessions.
  - B. An evaluation of your experience in your volunteer organization. We'll ask you questions to help you explore your impressions of your work and what you have learned.
  - C. *A two-three page response to several questions* we will ask you about your community service organization.

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## **17.903 Syllabus and Assignments**

### **9/11            Orientation Session**

Description of seminar, requirements  
How to find a volunteer placement  
Determine topics  
Hand out first reading packet

### **9/25            Discussion of first reading packet**

Discussion of first reading packet - first response paper due

First supervisor letter due  
Hand out questions  
Hand out second reading packet

**10/16**      **Discussion of second reading packet**  
Second response paper due

**10/30**      **Placement Discussion**  
Answers to questions about placement due  
**Hand out third reading packet**

**11/13**      **One of the following:**  
**Field trip, guest speaker, film, discussion of third reading packet**

**11/20**      **One of the following:**  
**Field trip, guest speaker, film, discussion of third reading packet**

**12/4**        **Final placement discussion and evaluation**

**12/11**      **End of semester dinner**  
Journal due  
Your own evaluation of your placement due  
Second supervisor evaluation due