



PSYC 363, Community Psychology

Spring 2006

- Instructor: **Dr. Kelly L. Hazel**, Assoc. Professor

Course Description: This course provides an introduction to the field of community psychology. Community psychology is concerned with person-environment interactions and the ways society impacts upon individual and community functioning. Community psychology focuses on social issues, social institutions, and other settings that influence individuals, groups, and organizations. Community psychology as a science seeks to understand relationships between environmental conditions and the development of health and well-being of all members of a community. The practice of community psychology is directed towards the design and evaluation of ways to facilitate psychological competence and empowerment, prevent disorder, and promote social change. The goal is to optimize the well-being of individuals and communities with innovative and alternative interventions designed in collaboration with affected community members and with other related disciplines inside and outside of psychology. The course will emphasize experiential learning and will draw upon resources and competencies of students in the class and the local community.

Course Objectives: This course will introduce students to the field of community psychology by describing the background and history of the field, presenting key concepts involved and acquainting students with the methods community psychologists use. The aim of this course is to help empower students to contribute to effective change in their communities. The goals of the course are that students will:

1. Acquire an understanding of the methods and values of community psychology and how it differs from community mental health and other subfields of psychology
2. Develop an understanding of the effects of societal, cultural, and environmental influences on psychological and community well-being
3. Explore the relationship between people and their environments, and consider ways of improving this relationship
4. Begin to think in terms of prevention of problems and alternatives to individually oriented services
5. Become familiar with innovative programs and practices geared towards prevention and empowerment of disenfranchised groups
6. Become aware of the various roles community psychologists play
7. Be able to apply their learning to a specific social problem that they identify in their community.

Format: Class meetings will consist of lecture, class discussion and, presentations by representatives of various community service agencies and groups. Each week will focus on one general topic. However, learning will not be limited to the classroom. Students will be expected to engage in some type of community volunteer experience in addition to attending class and reading course materials.

Course Requirements:

Attendance and Class Participation: Attendance, preparation, and participation in class discussions are required. Absence in no way relieves a student from the responsibility of completing all work/assignments/tests given in a particular session, or for material presented or covered in any scheduled class session. Students should be prepared to discuss the topics in the readings, to answer and ask questions, to challenge ideas presented in class, and attempt integrating ideas presented during class discussion. Students should also expect to discuss how the readings are related to their community experiences and readings from other fields.

Readings: Students are expected to come to class prepared to fully participate in discussions. In order to do so, students are expected to have read the required reading assignments before coming to class. The readings for each class session are noted in the class outline.

Texts (available in bookstore):

- Rudkin, J. K. (2003). *Community Psychology: Guiding principles and orienting concepts*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Additional readings will be assigned and made available at least one week before the class in which they will be discussed. Readings are listed in the course outline and bibliography. Readings will be available through the Metropolitan State University's **E-Res** system (<http://ereserve.metrostate.edu>). The password for the course site is: **empowerment**.

Web sites (and the links that they provide): Students are encouraged to check out the following:

- Society for Community Research and Action (APA Div. 27) home page: <http://www.scra27.org/>
- Society for Prevention Research: <http://www.preventionresearch.org/>
- The Community Toolbox: <http://ctb.ku.edu/>

Community Experience: In order to provide experiential based learning, students will be required to engage in 20 hours of community volunteer experience during the semester. Your volunteer experience can include activities such as attending community events, volunteering at a community service agency, organizing community action groups, interviewing individuals who are community service program recipients, service providers/administrators, and/or policy-makers, etc. The volunteer experience can not be a situation in which you are already engaged (e.g., job) or for which you are receiving credit in another class. Class discussions will help students to select, engage in, and learn from their community experience. Students will keep a journal of their experience (your thoughts, experiences, date and time spent in activity, etc.). The Journal (including a time log of your activities) will be required at the end of the semester.

Written Assignments:

Thought Papers: Four, two-three page (typed, double-spaced, one inch margins) thought papers will be required. These thought papers should address no more than one or two ideas **stimulated by the assigned readings for that week** (see course outline for due dates and readings). Do not exceed three pages! Be very precise in your discussion or argument as there is very little space in a three page paper. Your writing will need to get to the point early and the rest of the paper should build on or support this thought. Assume your audience (your classmates) has read the same material. There should be no need to give detailed summaries of the readings. The best thought papers are those that integrate ideas from the new readings or discuss the relationships between the new readings and previous readings, lectures, and personal experiences. Use your best critical thinking skills! Students should freely express their thoughts and ideas, and develop coherent and well drawn out arguments or statements. These papers should be provocative to both the writer and the readers. Students will be asked to share their papers with the class so that others may react to the ideas and provide the writer with a chance to refine her or his ideas.

Thought papers will be graded based upon:

1. clarity of presentation
2. integration and application of knowledge gained from readings and lectures
3. degree of critical thinking (i.e., analysis and synthesis of ideas)
4. scholarly, insightful and creative thought

Other Written Assignments: Throughout the semester a number of in-class exercises will entail a written product to be turned in either that night or the next class meeting. These will be announced and described as they come up.

A few more words about written assignments: It is expected that all written assignments will be clearly and well written. Besides being well thought out, assignments are to be typed, double-spaced, with one inch margins. All references to other work must be cited and referenced utilizing APA style. The

Writing Center can help you with this. If you do not already have a copy, I suggest that you purchase the APA publication manual. This book is an optional text and can be ordered from any bookstore:

American Psychological Association (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*, 5th ed. Washington, DC: author.

All assignments are to be handed in by 6:00 pm on the day the assignment is due (see course outline). No late assignments will be accepted. If a student turns in an assignment late, their grade will be adjusted to reflect their tardiness.

Important: For your own protection, you should keep a copy of all written work that you turn in.

Oral Presentation: Students will be required to make a brief presentation of a prevention program they have identified in the Twin Cities. This will be an informal presentation in order to share your learning with other students in class and to generate discussion on prevention practices. As part of your presentation you should

prepare a handout that provides an overview of the prevention program you are presenting. Your presentation will be graded primarily on clarity and focus.

Exams: Both the midterm and final exam will consist of multiple choice and short answer essay questions. Exams will cover the assigned readings as well as related lecture material, exercises, and any hand-outs distributed in class. No make-up exams will be given without the approval of the instructor before the scheduled exam date. If you can not be in class on the day of the exam, schedule a time to take the exam early.

Student with Disabilities

All students with disabilities who are requesting accommodations should give the Office for Students with Disabilities at least two weeks advance notice to ensure accommodations in time. If you have a documented learning disability, or if you suspect you have a learning disability that may impact your opportunity to succeed in this course, contact the instructor right away (before the second class meeting) to explore possible ways to reasonably accommodate your learning style.

Cheating and Plagiarism

Each student is expected to be honest in his/her work. Dishonesty in assignments, examinations, or other academic work is considered an extremely serious offense and will subject the student to disciplinary action. Likewise, plagiarism is considered an extremely serious offense. A student is guilty of plagiarism when he/she fails to give adequate credit for any ideas or material taken from another source for either written or oral presentation, including purchasing papers turned in as one's own work. The offering of materials assembled or collected by others in the form of projects or collections without acknowledgment also is considered plagiarism. Students exhibiting such behavior will fail this course. Please read the Academic Honor Code printed in the Metropolitan State University Student Handbook

Grading: Students' final grade will be based on their accumulated point total for assignments and exams based on the following possible points:

4 thought papers (2-3 pages ea.)	100 points (25 points each)	
20 hours community experience	50 points	
Community experience journal w/time log	50 points	
Class attendance and participation (in-class exercises)	50 points	
Oral Presentation of prevention program	50 points	
Assignments (listed above)	300 points	(60% of grade)
Midterm exam	100 points	(20% of grade)
Final exam	100 points	(20% of grade)
TOTAL	500 points	

Grading Scale:

90-100%	A
80-89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
less than 60%	F

An incomplete (I) grade will be assigned only if two conditions have been met. First, the student must have completed the majority of course work, written assignments and examinations, and earned a grade of 'C' or better. Normally, an 'I' grade will be given only when there has been class attendance and participation until at least the last three weeks of the semester. Second, documented evidence must be submitted to substantiate the fact that course completion was prevented because of personal problems, such as a medical or family emergency. Failing to attend or to complete the course, whether due to negligence or indifference, will result in a grade of 'F' unless there has been an official course withdrawal. If an 'I' is assigned, completion of all course work is the responsibility of the student. All course work must be completed within 1 year following the semester that the 'I' was given.

Course Outline

Session	Topic	Reading Assignments
Jan. 12	Overview of course and assignments So....What is Community Psychology?	Course syllabus Text: Chapter 1
Jan. 19	Community Psychology: Who we are and what we do	Text: Chapter 2 Wolff (2000) Society for Community Research and Action (APA Div. 27) home page: http://www.scra27.org/
Jan. 26	The importance of values	Text: Chapter 3 Prilleltensky (2001) First Thought Paper Due
Feb. 2	Beyond the individual level	Text: Chapter 4 McMillan (1996)
Feb. 9	Appreciating Diversity	Text: Chapter 5

		<p>Watts (1992)</p> <p>Reinharz (1994)</p> <p>White Privilege by Peggy McIntosh: http://www.utoronto.ca/acc/events/peggy1.htm</p> <p>Second Thought Paper Due</p>
Feb. 16	Embracing Social Change	<p>Text: Chapter 6</p> <p>Jason (1991)</p> <p>Checkoway (1995)</p>
Feb. 23	Strengths Perspective	<p>Text: Chapter 7</p> <p>Letter to the Editor Due (option 3, page 177 of text)</p>
March 2	MIDTERM	
March 9	NO CLASS: Spring Break	
March 16	Stress, Coping and Social Support	<p>Text: Chapter 8</p> <p>Hazel (2001)</p> <p>American Self-help Clearinghouse http://mentalhelp.net/selfhelp/</p>
March 23	Prevention	<p>Text: Chapter 9</p> <p>Albee (1986)</p> <p>Elias (1995)</p> <p>Third Thought Paper Due</p>
March 30	Prevention (cont.)	<p>Hays (2003)</p> <p>Jason (1998)</p> <p>Student presentation: Prevention in the Twin Cities</p>
April 6	Resilience & Wellness	<p>Text: Chapter 11</p> <p>Zimmerman (1999)</p>

		Cowen (1991)
April 13	Empowerment	Text: Chapter 10 Rappaport (1987) Kieffer (1984) Maton (1995) Fourth Thought Paper Due
April 20	Empowerment (cont.)	Watts (2003) Riger (1993) Moane (2003) Rappaport (2000) Community Experience Journal Due
April 27		Final Due

Course Bibliography

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