

.Rutgers- The State University
Department of Psychology, Faculty of Arts & Sciences

Course Title: Community Psychology and Community Mental Health -- Spring, 2007

Course No. 01:830:394:01

Meeting Times: Monday, Thursday noon-1:20

Place: Lucy Stone Hall, Room A142, Livingston Campus

Instructor: Maurice J. Elias, Ph.D.

Course Description: Community psychology is the branch of psychology most closely associated with how our society produces competent or dysfunctional citizens. It is especially concerned with the socialization institutions through which our children and youth pass (such as schools and families) and with the systems we have set up to help people when they have difficulties (i.e., mental health centers; psychiatric hospitals and other clinical services). Community psychologists seek to improve community mental health through research and social intervention programs such as prevention, citizen participation, environmental change, and influencing public policy. This course will introduce the background and content of community mental health and community psychology, present the key concepts involved and, through the use of examples and "lab activities," acquaint students with the methods community psychologists use. There will be a particular emphasis on our emerging understanding of cross-cultural competence and the influence of this on community psychology and community mental health interventions.

Because this is an RU/CASE (Community and Service Education) course, the perspective taken throughout the course will be one that focuses on the processes that lead to competence, strength, and resilience, and how these are necessary if children are to grow to become productive citizens in a democracy. We look especially at the role of environments in fostering this growth and how the relevant issues should become matters of public concern and policy. Finally, there will be an emphasis throughout on services for children and adolescents and the nature of volunteer and professional applied work, such as field work, field research, applied, school, and community psychology internship experiences, and involvement in community service and advocacy.

Prerequisites: Psychology of Abnormal Behavior or Introduction to Social Psychology or 200-level courses in Community Development/Urban Planning and junior or senior standing.

Course Objectives: The goals of the course are that students:

1. Understand the role of social, political, and economic factors in the development of community approaches to mental health care.

2. Develop a working knowledge of different approaches to prevent psychological disorder and promote community mental health and begin to think about how these can be practically implemented, especially in cross-cultural contexts.

3. Understand the application of ecological, developmental, and systems theories to the study of interpersonal adaptation and critical community problems such as child abuse and neglect; separation and divorce; substance abuse; delinquency; suicide; teenage pregnancy.

4. Develop familiarity with various skills necessary for community-related work, including needs assessment, intervention, planning, and program evaluation methods.

5. Interested students can register for the one credit field accompaniment/"lab" that provides an opportunity to integrate course learning with a community service placement at Middlesex County Head Start Centers in New Brunswick, Perth Amboy, or other sites in Central New Jersey. This will involve being assigned to a specific preschool classroom for one morning or afternoon per week for about 12 weeks of the semester. ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE FINALIZED AT THE THIRD CLASS MEETING, WHEN COORDINATORS WILL VISIT US FROM HEAD START. There are a large number of openings, but criteria for selection will include a confirmed scheduling match with the openings. Students who have done the Head Start/ CASE program before may repeat; you will be in a special, "Advanced Head Start/CASE" recitation and you may have somewhat more advanced responsibilities.

Topical Outline

<u>Dates Due</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>
1/18T 1/22M	<u>I. Orientation to the Course</u> 1. Background of CP	
1/25T	<u>II. Orientation To RU/CASE;</u> <u>Visit from Head Start Coordinator</u>	Dalton Ch.1
1/29M	<u>III. Principles and Devel. of Community Psych.</u> 1. What is CP? What are the Core Values? 2. How did CP develop?	Dalton Ch. 2-- writeup handed in Begin gathering social issues articles
2/1T	<u>IV. Approaches to Community Research</u> 1. The CP view of research	Dalton Ch. 3 and pp. 96-103,126-7, & 467-471;EQ Ch.1
2/5M	2. Community Psychology in Action	EQ-- two from Ch. 6,10,11
2/9T	<u>V. Impact of the Environment on Individuals</u> 1. Social Ecology Perspective	Dalton Ch. 5
2/12M 2/15T	<u>VI. The Sense of Community</u> 1. The Nature of Community Life 2. Lab in the Sense of Community: Laws of Life, Sense of Purpose; NASP Conference Preview	Dalton Ch.6 EQ Intro, Ch. 1, 8, 13;
2/19M 2/22T 2/26M	<u>VII. Stress, Coping, Support, Resilience</u> 1. Ecology and Mechanisms of Stress & Coping Children, Education, & Poverty Assign. 2. Lab in Resources for Coping and Support 3. Haberman Reaction Web Quest	Dalton p.240-264 Download Haberman Dalton p.264-276
3/1T	<u>VIII. Introduction to Prevention & Social Competence Promotion</u> 1. Prevention & Promotion: Key Concepts; Introduction to Force Field Project	Dalton p.284-309; Download Force Field Project Info. Hand in Web Quest
3/5M	2. Programs: "An Ounce of Prevention" Video; Introduction to SEL/Exam Preview	Dalton p.314-355; EI. Ch. 9

3/8T	EXAM/Force Field Project Preferences	
3/19M	No Class- ASCD Conference, California	
	<u>IX. Understanding Diversity, Empowerment</u>	
3/22T	1. Diversity, Oppression, Difference	Dalton Ch.7 writeup handed in
3/26M	2. Empowerment	Dalton Ch. 12
3/29T	NASP CONFERENCE- NEW YORK CITY	Review Dalton Ch. 9,10 & EQ Ch.'s
4/2M	No Class-- Passover Observance	
4/5T	NASP Review in class	
	<u>X. Force Field Analysis</u>	
4/9M	1. Preliminary	Bring in social issues articles & Force Field Outlines; Read all Force Field Web materials
4/12T	2. Force Field Lab - 1; Gather Background Information	Article Search for Force Field
4/16M	3. Force Field Lab - 2; Begin Outline, Review of Approach	
4/19T	4. Force Field Analysis-Final In-Class Meeting	
	<u>XI. Organizing for Change</u>	
4/23M	1. Creating Second Order Change in Schools and Students' Lives	EQ p.177-83;Ch.14 Hand in Force Field Projects
4/26T	2. Social Power and Community Change: Creating Change at Rutgers	Dalton Ch. 13
4/30M	Questions, FINAL EXAM REVIEW	Dalton Ch. 15

Academic Expectation: Evaluations will be based on: % of Grade

1. Class Participation: Class sessions will be devoted primarily to clarifying and supplementing basic points in the readings and also to skill-building labs. Participation is assumed to reflect effort and interest, as well as knowledge. 20%
2. Exams: Two exams will be given. These will be focused on mastery and application of key concepts and issues, as well as important points in the readings not covered in lectures. Reading summaries will be collected as part of each exam. 30%

Exams for this course require Scantron answer sheets, so bring #2 pencil(s) with erasers to all exams.

3. Group Projects: Students will work in groups to plan and carry out two largely but not completely in-class projects. The first will involve a Web Quest about the impact of poverty on education and mental health. The second is a Force Field Analysis of a community problem or issue. Further details will be provided in separate handouts. 35%
4. Action Letter: Based on the Force Field results, each student will be expected to submit an Action Letter-- such as to one's Congressperson or N.J. Legislator-- by April 24th. 15%
5. Bonus Project:
Do a CP write-up of CP articles/chapters to be selected OR NASP conference presentations; further details to be provided. add 1/2 exam grade

Attendance: Poor attendance will minimize the likelihood of one's obtaining a good grade, let alone a useful understanding of course material. Up to two unquestioned absences are permitted, but it's a good idea to let me know in advance if you cannot attend class.

Make-Up Exams: Midterm makeup exams will only be allowed under extenuating circumstances. If missed and not made up, an exam will be considered as a zero.

THOSE ARRIVING LATE FOR EXAMS ALSO ARE SUBJECT TO A GRADE-LOWERING PENALTY TO CORRESPOND TO THE EXTRA STUDYING TIME YOU HAD AVAILABLE.

Plagiarism & Cheating: I dislike even mentioning this, but all of the Psychology Department has decided to cooperate with regard to plagiarism and cheating. Either event will result in a reduction of two levels on one's course grade, and a note will be sent to the student's academic dean. Remember, Internet searches can detect almost any phrase you borrow without citation. Better to be unoriginal than dishonest. If you're having trouble with the material or an assignment, come see our T.A or me. We're here to help in any way we can.

Texts (Available at the Livingston Bookstore):

1. Dalton, J.H., & Associates. (2007). Community Psychology: Linking individuals and communities (2nd Edition). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
2. Elias, M. J., Arnold, H., & Hussey, C. (2002). EQ + IQ = Best Leadership Practices for Smart and Caring Schools. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
3. Materials to be handed out and materials on eCompanion, the class web site.