

INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

PSYCHOLOGY 487 – FALL 2008 – 3 CREDITS

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Class Meeting Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 1:25-2:15
Class Location Humanities 202
Office Hours Wednesday, 2:30 - 3:30 and by appointment

Required Text: Dalton, J.H., Elias, M.J., & Wandersman, A. (2007). Community Psychology: Linking Individuals and Communities, 2nd Edition. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth. *****Students are encouraged to bring their book to each class*****
**Note: some readings may be added later in the semester on topics not covered in the textbook. These readings will be posted as pdf files on Blackboard.*

Overview of Course

Community Psychology is both a rigorous academic discipline and an approach to community-based interventions. It emphasizes research and action. Over the past 40 years, it has developed alternative ways of understanding human problems and alternative ways of intervention. As such, it represents a paradigm shift away from traditional assumptions and practices of the social sciences and clinical practice. As a field, community psychology shares interests with clinical psychology, public health, sociology, anthropology, and social work, however, it often presents a unique perspective on issues.

This course is designed to give the student an introduction to the field of community psychology through lectures, reading, course work and focused experiences. We will cover major research milestones and contributions made by community psychologists that will orient students to the common research areas of the field. Students will learn major theories and concepts in the field, apply them to concerns of importance to you, and evaluate their potential implications for research, practice and policy. A primary goal for the course is to broaden student's conceptualizations of psychological and social problems and provide models of alternative ways to address them.

While lectures will be the primary mode of teaching these concepts, participation in discussion and **applied experiences will also be used to explore community psychology ideas. Your participation is considered a very important part of this class and will be graded as such.**

Class attendance is also very important and will be recorded for each class. Behavior and participation in class should follow USC's Carolinian Creed, found on the web at: <http://www.sa.sc.edu/carolinacommunity/toc.htm> If there are any questions about this in regards to anything, specifically cheating, please contact the instructor.

ASSIGNMENTS, GRADING, & METHODS OF EVALUATION

A total of **400 points** can be earned from required assignments, quizzes, and exams. Some extra credit opportunities will also be available. The breakdown is as follows:

50 points - Participation & Attendance – *taken at beginning of class*
50 points - Quizzes (*five of seven, two lowest scores will be dropped*)

20 points - Diversity Experience Paper
80 points - MID-TERM EXAM– multiple choice, some essay

100 points - Community Involvement Project / Research Paper
Research paper is an alternative only with instructor's permission
20 points – Class Debate Paper
80 points - FINAL EXAM – cumulative, multiple choice, some essay

- **Examinations** will consist of short answer essay questions and objective questions such as multiple-choice, true and false, fill-in-the-blank and matching. The Final exam will be **cumulative**.
- **Quizzes** – Each quiz will be worth 10 points. These will use a multiple choice format covering material from the book and lectures. The scores of your top five quizzes will be used to compute your grade; the two lowest scores will be dropped. Thus, **there will be no make-up quizzes for any reason**.
- **Diversity Experience and Paper – DUE OCTOBER 1**
 - Papers need to be submitted on Blackboard using the Digital Dropbox by 5 pm on the date it is due. I will not accept hard copies of papers. *Always save copies of your papers.*
 - **Late Papers will have 10 points deducted for each day late.**

Diversity Experience - You will be required to attend your choice of an event that you would not normally attend. This event should provide you a new experience in terms of exposure to beliefs or experiences different from your own. Examples could be attending a culturally different religious service, going to a speaker or meeting on campus, attending a musical concert or community celebration that is different from your experience. Remember, diversity not only includes ethnicity and race, but gender, social class, age, sexual orientation, disability, religious/ spirituality, political views. In this assignment you are expected to (a) make a good faith effort to understand the perspectives of the community group that is hosting the event, (b) participate as you feel comfortable. *Although you don't need to identify yourself, you are expected to represent the university in a positive light.* This experience should last for at least 1-1.5 hours. Please bring some kind of documentation back from your experience to include with your paper. I am happy to talk with students about the assignment.

Diversity Paper - When you have completed the experience, please write a 3-4 page (double-spaced) paper addressing the following (follow this outline and label each section):

- a. Your name and description of the experience.
- b. Describe why you considered this experience was different or new experience.
- c. Detail how you felt about two or more aspects of the experience.
- d. Discuss what made the experience similar to things you have already experienced.
- e. Apply two concepts from the Human Diversity Chapter and two concepts from Chapters 1-6 that help you understand your brief experience.
- f. What more do you need to know to better understand the group hosting the event?

➤ **Community Involvement Project & Paper DUE NOVEMBER 24**

The community involvement project requires active participation over time in a community organization. It also requires that you integrate ideas from lecture and readings with this practical experience. The project is intended to give you an opportunity to apply course material in ways that go beyond the classroom.

- 1) The first step in completing this project is to **contact a community organization** with which you would be interested in working before turning in your Project Proposal on September 22. We are available to talk about the type of organization that you might want to work with and how to contact them. *The community organization must be involved in efforts to promote community change or community development.*
- 2) The second step is to prepare a 1-2 page proposal and meet with the graduate assistant. The proposal should include the following information:
 - i. Description of the organization – *what does it do and how does it accomplish its goals?*
 - ii. Your proposed involvement with the organization – *what will you be doing and how often?*
 - iii. What you expect to learn from the experience – *how does the organization relate to the concepts and strategies for change discussed in the course?*
- 3) Next, **participate in a community organization** for at least two hours per week for five weeks during the semester. Participation should begin no later than October 13 and should be completed by November 17.
- 4) **Have your participation documented** with a written letter from the person supervising your involvement at the organization. This letter is due no later than Monday, November 24 (the paper deadline)
- 5) Finally, **write a 6-8 page paper** integrating your experiences from your involvement with the organization and the topics covered in class. Papers need to be submitted on Blackboard using the Digital Dropbox by 5 pm on the date it is due. I will not accept hard copies of papers. *Always save copies of your papers.*
 - **Project Proposal due September 22**
 - **Paper Due November 24**
 - **Late Papers will have 10 points deducted for each day late.**

➤ **Alternative: Community Observation Project & Paper DUE NOVEMBER 24**

The community observation project requires gathering information from an organization or a number of organizations involved in social change efforts. For example, you might choose a particular social issue or problem of interest to you and find out which organizations in town address this issue. Gather information about the organization's goals and philosophy of change in the form of written documents and conversations with leaders and participants. Using concepts from the course, provide an analysis of how the organization defines problems and their strategies for addressing them.

The project could also be combined with library research on the particular focus of your observation. For example, if you were interested in a local group that is part of a national or international organization (e.g., Habitat for Humanity, Boys & Girls Club, etc.) you might interview people from the local community and do library/ internet research on the organization.

- 1) The first step in completing the project is to decide on an organization or issue on which you want to focus your research before turning in your project proposal on September 22. We are available to talk about the type or issue and organization you are considering. *The community organization must be involved in efforts to promote community change or community development.*
- 2) The second step is to prepare a 1-2 page proposal and meet with the graduate assistant. The proposal should include the following information:
 - a. Description of the issue and/or organization – *what does it do and how does it accomplish its goals?*
 - b. What you expect to learn from the experience – *how does the organization relate to the concepts and strategies for change discussed in the course?*
- 3) Next, being conducting research according to the plan outlined and approved in your proposal
- 4) **Write a 6-8 page paper** integrating your experiences from your involvement with the organization and the topics covered in class. Papers need to be submitted on Blackboard using the Digital Dropbox by 5 pm on the date it is due. I will not accept hard copies of papers. *Always save copies of your papers*
Project Proposal due September 22
Paper Due November 24
Late Papers will have 10 points deducted for each day late.

➤ **Class Attendance & Participation** – 50 points

1. Class participation is viewed as critical to learning and understanding the material. Thus, attendance is required FOR ALL CLASSES and will be recorded for each class period. If the student has to miss class for family or medical situations, please inform the instructor **beforehand**. If an absence is unexcused, points will be deducted for each class. If more than 10% of classes are absent, excused or unexcused, up to 10% of the grade will be deducted (see USC policy statement below).
2. Please read all materials BEFORE COMING TO CLASS so that you will be prepared for class discussion on that chapter.

The following statement is from the *University of South Carolina Undergraduate Studies Bulletin*. You may wish to look at this publication for a complete statement of this and other policies affecting you. Excessive absence during the semester could cause a reduction in your grade.

*“Students are obligated to complete all assigned work promptly, to attend class regularly, and to participate in whatever class discussion may occur. Absence from more than 10 percent of the scheduled class sessions, whether excused or unexcused, is excessive and the instructor may choose to exact a grade penalty for such absences. The instructor's attendance policy should be ascertained by the student at the beginning of the semester. It is of particular importance that a student who anticipates absences in excess of 10 percent of the scheduled class sessions receive prior approval from the instructor before the last day to change schedule as published in the Master Schedule of Classes. **It must be emphasized that the "10 percent rule" stated above applies to both excused and unexcused absences.** Faculty members should notify classes specifically of the attendance policy which they intend to follow in each class.”*

Grades will be assigned as follows from a total of 400 points:

360 points & above (90% or >)	=	.....	A
352 - 359 (88- 89%)	=	.....	B+
320 - 351 (80- 87%)	=	.....	B
312 - 319 (78-79%)	=	.....	C+
280 - 311 (70- 77%)	=	.....	C
272 - 279 (68-69%)	=	.....	D+
240 - 271 (60- 67%)	=	.....	D
239 & below (<60%)	=	.....	F

- **Extra credit** essays will be offered but, **must be turned by 5 pm on the date due.** For the essays, you will be asked to apply principles learned in class to a social issue to a media item (e.g., newspaper, magazine, movie, song) or an event in the community (e.g., city council meeting, speaker). **SUBMIT MEDIA ITEM ALONG WITH YOUR ANALYSIS (e.g., song, article, tv show, movie, etc.)**
 - **Each extra credit assignment has a total of 10 possible points.**
 - Essays should be between 2-4 pages, 11-12 point font, single spaced. Each assignment must address each of the following. Use the outline format presented below:
 - a) problem definition
 - b) target population
 - c) level of analysis of sources of problems AND for points of intervention
 - d) type of intervention
 - e) match between levels of analysis/definition and levels of analysis intervention
 - f) illustrate *five other concepts from the course*
 - Students will receive points for no more than 4 extra credit assignments.
 - Essays should be submitted on Blackboard using the Digital Dropbox by 5 pm on the date it is due. I will not accept hard copies of essays. *Always save copies of your essays.*
 - **Late extra credit essays will not be accepted.** As outlined below, the dates for each assignment are as follows: EC#1 - 10/20, EC#2 - 11/3, EC # 3 - 11/17, EC#4 - 12/5.

INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

*WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF TOPICS, READINGS, & ASSIGNMENTS FOR PSYC 487 *
FALL 2008*

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
8/22	Overview of Course		
8/25	Defining Community Psychology	Chapter 1	
8/27	Defining Community Psychology	Chapter 1	
8/29	Development of Community Psychology	Chapter 2	<i>QUIZ 1</i>
9/1	<i>Labor Day</i>		<i>NO CLASS</i>
9/3	Aims of Community Research	Chapter 3	
9/5	Methods & Examples of Community Research	Chapter 4	
9/8	Social Ecology & Ecological Concepts	Chapter 5	<i>QUIZ 2</i>
9/10	Social Ecology & Ecological Concepts	Chapter 5	
9/12	Social Ecology & Ecological Concepts	Chapter 5	
9/15	Sense of Community	Chapter 6	
9/17	Sense of Community	Chapter 6	
9/19	Sense of Community	Chapter 6	<i>QUIZ 3</i>
9/22	Human Diversity	Chapter 7	PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE
9/24	Human Diversity	Chapter 7	
9/26	Human Diversity	Chapter 7	
9/29	Human Diversity	Chapter 7	
10/1	Social Support & Coping	Chapter 8	DIVERSITY EXPERIENCE PAPER DUE
10/3	Social Support & Coping	Chapter 8	
10/6	Social Support & Coping	Chapter 8	<i>QUIZ 4</i>
10/8	MID-TERM EXAM		MID-TERM EXAM
10/10	<i>Fall Break</i>		<i>NO CLASS</i>

Date	Topic Continued	Readings	Assignments
10/13	Prevention & Promotion - Concepts	Chapter 9	
10/15	Prevention & Promotion - Concepts	Chapter 9	
10/17	Prevention & Promotion - Concepts	Chapter 9	
10/20	Prevention & Promotion - Programs	Chapter 10	* <i>EXTRA CREDIT #1 DUE</i>
10/22	Prevention & Promotion - Programs	Chapter 10	
10/24	Prevention & Promotion - Programs	Chapter 10	<i>QUIZ 5</i>
10/27	Empowerment	Chapter 12	
10/29	Empowerment	Chapter 12	
10/31	Empowerment	Chapter 12	
11/3	Community & Social Change	Chapter 13	* <i>EXTRA CREDIT #2 DUE</i>
11/5	Community & Social Change	Chapter 13	
11/7	Community & Social Change	Chapter 13	<i>QUIZ 6</i>
11/10	Program Evaluation & Development	Chapter 14	
11/12	Program Evaluation & Development	Chapter 14	
11/14	Program Evaluation & Development	Chapter 14	
11/17	Implementation of Intervention Programs	Chapter 11	* <i>EXTRA CREDIT #3 DUE</i>
11/19	Implementation of Programs	Chapter 11	
11/21	Implementation of Programs	Chapter 11	<i>QUIZ 7</i>
11/24	Emerging Trends in Comm Psychology	Chapter 15	
11/26-28	<i>Thanksgiving Break</i>		
12/1	Class Debates	TBD	PROJECT PAPERS DUE
12/3	Class Debates	TBD	
12/5	What is Community Psychology Revisited	TBD	<i>Last Day of Classes</i> * <i>EXTRA CREDIT #4</i>
Friday 12/12	<i>FINAL EXAM</i>	<i>2:00 P.M.</i>	

* The above schedule and assignments are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.