

Rural Community Psychology ▾ Psychology 494 UG (632 G) Spring Semester 2008

Location: Corbin 52 (Tentative)
Wednesday 10:00 ▾ 1:00

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 8-10 and by appointment

Purpose of Class: Rural America makes up 20% of the U.S. population living across 80% of the land mass. Rural residents experience higher rates of chronic disease and disability due to mental illness, cognitive impairments, injury, and other causes than their urban counterparts. Historically, support services and treatment delivered in rural areas have been based on urban models. Significant evidence suggests that simply extending urban models to rural communities does not work. Instead, there is a need to develop rural models that fit the context of rural communities. Psychologists and other social and behavioral scientists can play a crucial role in both providing services to rural residents and building rural community capacity. The purpose of this course is to prepare psychologists and other social scientists to work in and serve rural areas, and to conduct research on issues of importance to rural communities. This course will provide an introduction to the methods of community psychology, and a survey of the status of rural America, the experience of disability in rural communities, and methods psychologists can use to build community capacity to address the issues of importance to rural residents. This course may be particularly useful to clinical students who will work in rural communities and to other students who anticipate careers that may include research and development of new treatment programs.

Outcome: Students will learn about methods of community psychology as they are applied in rural communities. Students will learn about the variety of issues confronting rural residents with disability due to a variety of impairments. Students will learn how to apply the procedures for conducting systematic reviews of literature.

Class Processes and Activities:

1. Lecture and discussion: Lectures will outline specific topics. Students will read selected chapters from two texts and selected articles to be distributed. Class time will also involve discussion.

2. Guest lectures: Policy makers and providers serving rural areas will make invited presentations to class on selected topics (e.g., rural outreach services, tele-medicine, etc.).
3. Key readings for presentation and discussion. Students will be assigned articles to read and to summarize for selected classes. Each student will provide a brief (5-10 minute) oral summary of the reading for the class.
3. Review and concept paper. Students will select an issue (e.g., rural employment), population (e.g., children with special health care needs), problem (e.g., affordable housing for the mentally ill), service model (teletherapy), or treatment approach (e.g., support groups) and conduct a review of literature on the topic. The review will be structured to follow the procedures for conducting a “systematic” literature review. Undergraduate students may select a topic from a list of “key questions” with a prepared outline for conducting the review. Graduate students may develop their own topic and specify the content elements for the review. Undergraduates must conduct their review using at least one major literature data base (e.g., Web of Knowledge). Graduate students must use at least two (e.g., PsychLit). Students will use their review as a basis to develop a brief concept paper in a standard format that outlines a potential line of research or policy development that would extend findings of interest to the student.

Reading and Materials:

Stamm, B.H. (2003). *Rural behavioral health care: An interdisciplinary guide*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Keys, C.B. & Dowrick, P.W. (2001). *People with disabilities: Empowerment and community action*. New York: Haworth Press.

Selected articles addressing specific issues will be determined.

Evaluation and Grading:

Students will be evaluated along the following performances and products. A total of 100 points may be achieved with the distribution for each performance or product listed in parentheses. The +/- system will not be used. Grades will be assigned as follows:

A = 90 B 100

B = 80 - 89

C = 70 - 79

D = 60 B 69

F = 0 - 59

- Class participation

- Participation in and contribution to class discussion; including oral summaries of assigned readings. (5)

Article Reviews

- Preparation of a written review of one to two readings and an oral presentation of the review. (10)

- Systematic Review

- Completion of a written review and concept paper that summarizes research in a selected area of relevance to rural community psychology. (40)

- Presentation and defense of review and concept paper in class (5)

- Mid-term and final examination

- Mid-term examination (Brief essay) (20)
- Final examination (Brief essay) (20)

Dropping the Course:

The last day to drop the class on Cyberbear is February 11th. The class may be dropped using a drop/add form until March 4th. Late drops will not be supported.

Attendance Policy:

If you know you will miss a class, be late, or leave early, please, call in advance. Attendance at the first eight classes is particularly important. If you miss any of these classes, you should see me to be sure you understand the assignments, as they are required.

Examination:

A mid-term and final examination will be required.

Incompletes:

It is assumed that students have the responsibility for completing the requirements of the courses in which they are enrolled within the time framework of the semester. Incompletes may be given when, in the opinion of the instructor, there is a reasonable probability that students can complete the course without retaking it. The incomplete is not an option to be exercised at the discretion of students. Please, see the Catalog for details.

Student Conduct:

The provisions of the University's Student Conduct Code will apply to this course and should be reviewed. All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student conduct code. The Code is available for review online at <http://www.umt.edu/SA/VP/SA/index.cfm/page/1321>.