

Community Psychology

Lewis and Clark College, Fall 2006
Course 460
Tuesday/Thursday 11:30-1pm

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Office Hours: Thursdays 1:30pm-3pm
 Fridays 10:30-11:30am
 And by appointment Or stop by when my door is open

Community Psychology Course Reader Various Authors; Available for \$35 in class

Required
Texts: *Writing Literature Reviews* By Jose L. Galvan, 3rd edition

Course Description:

Welcome to Community Psychology! In community psychology we will study people in their social environments in order to improve their psychological health and well-being. Whereas the traditional focus of applied psychology has been the study of individual behavior, community psychology extends this focus to encompass the understanding of groups, organizations, and communities. As scientists, community psychologists use qualitative and quantitative research methods to study the relationships between environmental conditions and the health and well-being of a community. The practice of community psychology is directed toward the design and evaluation of programs aimed at preventing distress, building competencies, and promoting social change. The course will begin with an overview of community psychology, taking into consideration practitioners' perspectives, research methods, and ethics. From there, we will explore how communities function by studying the psychological sense of community. In the final portion of the class we will study how community psychologists work to prevent social problems, enhance community engagement, and promote social change.

The primary text for this course is the *Community Psychology Course Reader*. This reader is made up of articles and chapters written by the top researchers, academics, and practitioners in the field. Galvan's *Writing Literature Reviews* will guide you through the process of completing your own review of the literature. You also are required to **volunteer for at least 6 hours** at a local agency devoted to issues surrounding hunger and homelessness, a sub-theme of this year's course. The list of agencies will be distributed on the first class day. Community psychology is a challenging, reading-intensive and work-intensive course. Many of the projects are group-based; therefore your schedule will need to have enough flexibility to accommodate others' time constraints. You will have quizzes and research/writing assignments most every week. Being a participant in this course *requires* that you complete all the readings and assignments in their entirety and attend every class.

Course Goals:

My primary goal is for you to acquire an understanding of the theoretical perspectives and research methods associated with community psychology. In taking this class, you will enhance your understanding of the complex relationships between people and their environments (including ways of improving these relationships) and develop an ability to design interventions intended to prevent problems at a community level. You will learn strategies for achieving change in community systems, develop an appreciation for the ways in which people are shaped by the proximal environment (i.e., microsystem) and broader society (i.e., macrosystem), and be able to assess community psychology's ability to help people improve their lives. Finally, you will begin to understand the rewards and challenges associated with working as a psychologist in the community.

Office Hours:

I hope you will visit me in my office throughout the term. No appointment is necessary to see me during my office hours; simply stop by room 235 of the Bio-Psych building. If you would like to make an appointment for another time, please call me at x7506 or email me at jerusha@lclark.edu.

Course Policies:

Preparation. Class discussion, group projects, debates, and demonstrations will be used throughout the term to help you keep up with the material and to help assure that the concepts are clear. I expect you to be fully prepared for class each week. Full preparation includes not only keeping up with the reading, but also having spent time thinking and writing about the topic for the day in terms of its application to your own life and in terms of questions that you would like me (or your classmates) to answer. Do not come to class unless you are fully prepared, with your text in hand.

Participation. Participation, through leading discussions, asking questions, and being involved in debates and demonstrations, is a *graded* requirement of this course. Active participation in class requires a safe and trusting environment. Therefore it is important for us to respect each other's views and comments, even if we disagree with them. I encourage debate and thought-provoking discussion, but it must be respectful and polite.

Attendance. Although I do not take attendance in this course, attending class is a prerequisite for meaningful participation. Most of your learning will come from discussions in class, so you cannot make up a missed class by simply copying notes from a classmate. If you must miss a class, please first obtain information about the missed class from your classmates. After you have gleaned what you can from your classmates, I will be happy to talk to you in more detail about the class you missed.

Academic Integrity. Academic integrity is an essential part of learning. Plagiarism, cheating, or the deliberate misrepresentation of information will result in failure of this course. Please avoid any behavior that may be reasonably viewed as suspicious. Remember that helping a classmate to cheat counts as cheating. If you have any questions about citation requirements or plagiarism boundaries, please see the instructor *before* you turn in your assignments. If you have any questions or concerns about academic honesty, please come see me or refer to your copy of Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures.

Learning Disabilities. Learning disabilities will be accommodated if the professor is notified in a timely fashion. It is the student's responsibility to have any learning disability documented at the Student Development Center and to inform the professor as soon as possible in the semester.

Other. All college policies govern this course. Please see the Student Handbook and Catalog for any issues not covered in this syllabus.

Requirements and Grading:

Your course grade will be composed of your class participation, book review, and community lab.

Class Participation: Community psychology is a discussion-oriented class, and as such, your involvement in our daily discussions is central to the mission of the course. Your class participation will be formally evaluated in three ways:

(1) Involvement in Daily Discussions (10%): I value very highly the different experiences and perspectives of each of you. I expect that you will keep up with the readings and that you will find opportunities to contribute to most every class. I also expect you to take personal responsibility for building on, responding to, and helping to develop others' ideas as well as your own. This can be done in a number of ways, including (i) asking for clarification ("I don't think I fully understand; do you mean...") or elaboration ("Can you say more about that?") from classmates, and (ii) asking good questions of one another that foster collaborative thinking, critical reflection, and problem solving. This should be done routinely – not only when you are filling the role of discussion leader (see description below).

Small group work will sometimes take place during class time, and additional, out-of-class assignments will sometimes be given for use in our daily discussions. All members of the class are responsible for completing these brief assignments *before class* and for actively contributing to the small group work and to the larger class discussions. At the end of the semester, I will evaluate how involved you were in daily discussions, including the small group work and related brief assignments. This evaluation will contribute 10% to your final grade in the course.

(2) Discussion Leader (10%): Although I expect all students to contribute to every class discussion, each of you will have the opportunity to be a *Discussion Leader* on one class day. You will select the specific topic (and date) on the first day of class. Once you have chosen your topic and date, you can only make changes with the permission of the professor, usually by finding a classmate who would be willing to trade dates. The Discussion Leader position contributes 10% to your final grade in the course and comes with 4 central responsibilities:

(a) On **the class day before** you are Discussion Leader, you will bring in 22 copies of a 4-page write-up that includes: (i) an outline of the next day's reading, (ii) a one-paragraph (single spaced) summary of the "take-home" messages of the reading, and (iii) 5-10 novel discussion questions that could be used when you lead the discussion in the next class. Print out enough copies of your write-up so that every member of the class (and your professor) can have their own copy. You also will bring in 1 copy (for the professor) of 4 quiz questions and one answer key. The first 3 questions should address your discussion leader readings, but they must go beyond the material summarized in your outline and description of the take-home messages. The quiz questions should be multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, and/or matching (rather than essay). Each of the first 3 quiz questions should be worth 1 point. The fourth question (worth 2 points) of every leader quiz should be written as follows:

4. To what extent did you complete the assigned reading for today?
 - a) Read less than half or skimmed less than 90% of the assigned reading (0pts)
 - b) Skimmed most (90% or more) of the assigned readings (1/2pt)
 - c) Read with care at least half of the assigned reading (1pt)
 - d) Read with care most (90% or more) of the assigned reading (2pts)

(b) On the day you are leading the discussion, you will you will bring in 22 copies of 4 quiz questions and help guide the day's discussion of the readings. Your classmates will take the quiz that you have designed, and you will grade and hand back their responses on the following class day (see "Leader Quizzes," described below).

(c) You will open your discussion with a **critical reflection** of the day's reading. A critical reflection includes a brief overview of the reading and a description of its relation to one of the following: your field work, other readings (including articles found in reputable newspapers or magazines), observations based on material from other courses, or personal experiences (e.g., past volunteer work, overseas study experiences). You will then help to lead the day's discussion.

(d) You will complete and turn in a Discussion Leader Self-Evaluation Form on the subsequent class day. You will also turn in a one-paragraph summary of your **critical reflection** and a list of your classmates' grades on your Leader Quiz.

Ex: If you were assigned to be the Discussion Leader on September 21st, you would bring 22 copies of your outline/summary sheet/quiz to class with you on September 19th. You would bring in 22 copies of the Leader Quiz and help lead the discussion on September 21st, and you would

turn in your Self-Evaluation Form, a written description of your Critical Reflection, and Leader Quiz grades on September 26th.

(3) Leader Quizzes (15%): Because this seminar-style class depends so heavily on student discussion, careful and critical reading of the assigned chapters is very important. In order to evaluate whether or not you have completed the readings, your discussion leader will give you a quiz at the start of every class day. (If you arrive late to class you will not be allowed to make up the quiz.) Your lowest 3 scores (including absences or late arrivals) will be dropped from your final grade. Quizzes will be discussed in class and corrected by your discussion leader.

Field Work Project (15%): Each student will be required to spend **at least 6 hours** in the field, volunteering at one of a number of pre-approved community agencies specializing in issues related to hunger and/or homelessness in Oregon. Mei-Yen Hui (shui@lclark.edu), the Civic Engagement Coordinator in the Office of Student Leadership and Service (<http://www.lclark.edu/dept/service/>), will help facilitate the field work placements (x7762). Please be aware that the 6 hours *does not* include time for transportation to or training at the agency. It is critical that you leave ample time in your schedule for the field work component of the course. Toward the end of the semester (**November 28th**) you will be turning in a 3-page Field Work Reflection Paper. In this brief paper, you will be asked to list the dates and times of your volunteer work (signed by a person in the agency), describe the activities you were involved in, and discuss how your experience connected with the issues, theories, or discussions we had in class.

Beyond Volunteerism*: Although community service is an important part of community psychology, the work of the community psychologist goes beyond providing volunteer services. Community psychology students should think of themselves as “consultants” who bring expertise and resources to the community agencies in helping the agency to address important questions. Community agencies also bring their expertise and field knowledge to the table, and ideally, community psychology students can work in a collaborative partnership with their community agency to address key issues and questions.

For example, a community agency might be interested in developing ways to enhance its volunteer component, to recruit more volunteers, and to ensure more long-term volunteering. One approach would be to have community psychology students simply act as volunteers with the agency during the semester. This provides a group of dedicated volunteers for the school year and meets an important agency need; however, such an approach does not meet the long-term needs of the agency, and it doesn't address the more fundamental concern of how the agency might restructure its recruitment or training activities to ensure a steady stream of long-term volunteers. In order to move beyond volunteerism, this semester you will be taught the skills necessary to design and carry out a focus group interview that, for example, could help a community agency develop, implement, and fine-tune volunteer recruitment, training, and maintenance activities.

**Thanks to Dr. Eric Mankowski and Dr. Hugo DuCoudray in the Psychology Department at Portland State University for providing the conceptual foundation and language of “Beyond Volunteerism.”*

Focus Group Interviews: During the semester you will learn how to design and conduct a focus group interview for your community agency. In focus groups, the researcher arranges an interview with a relatively small number of persons (generally 4-8 people) who have in common some characteristic of interest (ex: the group would be made up of only volunteers, only clients, or only donors). The purpose is to assess the similarities and differences among people in the focus group in how they respond to ideas and topics posed during the interview. A focus group includes a note-taker and a moderator who guides the interview from one topic or question to another, follows up on interesting lines of thought or points needing clarification, moves the conversation from generalities to specifics, and makes sure everyone is heard. The data consist of a write-up of the responses of the group, the interactions among the participants themselves, and observations made by the moderator and note-taker.

You will be paired up with another classmate at your agency, and each pair will be responsible for designing and carrying out one focus group interview. The questions asked in the focus group will be developed around a topic that the agency is interested in researching -- some agencies may want to use the focus groups to get feedback on an existing program and/or evaluate what is working and what could be improved. Other organizations may want to use the focus group to garner reactions to a new program idea. Some sample questions include: What is the best thing about our organization? If you could change

one thing about our organization, what would it be? What additional services would you like to see our organization offer? What is the most valuable service we offer? What has been your personal experience with our organization? The text and design of the focus group interview is due *no later than November 21st*. The timing of the focus group interviews themselves will vary, depending on the needs and desires of the particular agency.

Community Lab* (50%):

Community psychology, perhaps more than other disciplines within psychology, is dedicated to the idea of ecological validity (i.e., getting out into the community and seeing how things "really" are). The lab is designed to allow you to apply to real-life settings the concepts you will learn about and discuss in class. During the second week of class you will be divided into three or four lab groups, each of which will investigate a relevant problem for students at Lewis and Clark College. Over the course of the term, various assignments will help you focus your project. The last half-hour of each Thursday's class will be reserved for lab group meetings, but it is expected that you also will meet outside of class.

Your group will decide on the product it wants to produce during week 7 and will produce that product during the second half of the term. Projects are due on the last day of class (**December 12th**). With the product, you will be asked to include an appendix detailing what the group members did week by week, what challenges were met, and what you learned about community interventions (relate your experiences to the readings). Please keep a "Lab Notebook" to document your meeting dates, topics of discussion, problems, and progress. Projects will be graded based on overall quality of the product, creativity, depth of reflection on the process, clarity and organization. Your group will also give a formal, 30-45 minute presentation during the final exam period, in which you will describe both the process and outcome of your project. Productive collaboration with members of your lab group is central to this project, and it will be formally evaluated. Members of each group will be surveyed at the end of the term in order to ensure that group members' individual contributions to the project are reflected in each person's grade.

Week	Community Lab Task for the Week: <i>Due Thursday at class time</i>
1-11 <i>Solo</i>	Literature review (20%) Over the course of the semester, you will be writing a literature review related to your community lab's topic. Galvan's <i>Writing Literature Reviews</i> will guide you through this process. <i>Tasks for class:</i> Divide topics among group members; discuss topic outlines; review a peer's draft; discuss final literature review; find areas of overlap and discrepancy within lab group.
2-3	Brainstorm list of problems; select 3-4 problems; form lab groups
4 <i>Solo</i>	Your perceptions of the problem (2%) Turn in brief (2 page) paper describing your views on the following questions: a. How do you define the problem (what is the REAL cause of the problem?)? b. How bad do you think the problem is? c. How do you think the problem could be solved? d. How have you managed to avoid the problem (if you have)? <i>Task for class:</i> Discuss your perceptions of the problem.
5 <i>Solo</i>	Perceptions of the community (i.e., students) (3%) Turn in a one-page interview summary for each of 3 students you interview about the problem. Ask questions a-d above. Try to interview people with diverse perspectives. <i>Task for class:</i> Decide what are important areas within the problem that need to be explored; identify relevant professionals in the community (one professional per group member).

7 Solo	Perceptions of the "professionals" (5%) Turn in a 2-4 page summary of your interview (phone or in person) with a relevant professional in the community. Ask questions a-c above and also: e. How is the problem currently being addressed in this community and elsewhere? f. What past interventions have been tried and how did they work? g. Is there any important aspect of the problem that is not being addressed? <i>Task for class:</i> Identify a target for change: a useful and manageable project that the lab group could accomplish, with a specific product. Possibilities include conducting a more formal needs assessment, evaluating a current program in the community, writing and submitting a policy recommendation, researching a particular issue for a professional that needs information, designing an intervention (this is likely to be an academic exercise, although you could design it with a specific agency in mind to implement it).
8-13 Group	Implement project (I will be available to consult with your group on your projects.)
14 Group	Turn in project (10%) Group presentation of project to other lab groups during final exam (10%)

*Thanks to Dr. Steve Davis in the Psychology Department at North Central College for guidance in the design of the community lab.

Grading Scale:

Receiving 80-85% on any given project or presentation is average for this kind of upper-division course. A final grade between 80-89% reflects work that is normally done thoughtfully and thoroughly by advanced students. Final grades of 90-100% are only earned by students who consistently do outstanding work, make unique contributions, and show an unusually strong commitment to being active participants in the learning experience.

The following scale will be used to compute your final grade:

A- or A	90-100%	B- B or B+	80-89%	C or C+	72-79%	D+	68-69%	F	0-61%
				C-	70-71%	D	62-67%		

Basis of Evaluation:

Your final grade for the course will be based on the following:

Daily Discussions:	10%
Discussion Leader:	10%
Leader Quizzes:	15%
Field Work Project:	15%
Community Lab:	50%
TOTAL =	100%

Community Psychology Course Schedule, Fall 2006

DATE	Tentative Topic	Readings (Due Date)	Assignments (Due Date)
	Introducing Community Psychology		
5 Sept	1. Welcome to Community Psychology	Syllabus	
7 Sept	2. Defining Community Psychology <i>Guest Speakers:</i> Mei-Yen Hui (Civic Engagement Coordinator); Brian Ferschweiler (Blanchet House)	Dalton et al. (1); Sarason (2000)	Leader Quizzes
12 Sept	3. Practitioners' Perspectives <i>Guest Speakers:</i> Bill Boyd (JOIN); Debbie Coppenger (Operation Nightwatch)	Wolff (2000); Galvan 1	Galvan #2 (p.9); Choose volunteer site
14 Sept	4. Poverty and Hunger in Oregon <i>Video</i>	Goering et al. (2002); OFB (2004)	
19 Sept	5. The Community at Lewis & Clark College <i>Guest Speaker:</i> President Hochstettler	LC Taskforce Report	Review past projects; Pick lab groups
	Research Methods in Community Psych		
21 Sept	6. Overview of Research Methods	Dalton et al. (4)	<i>First lab group meeting</i>
26 Sept	7. Research Methods (cont.): Focus Groups	Gibbs (1997); ISU (2004); FGG (49-57); Galvan 2	
28 Sept	8. Using Focus Groups <i>Guest Speaker:</i> Brian Detweiler-Bedell	Dumka et al. (1998); Galvan 3	Perceptions of problem
3 Oct	9. Ethical Issues in Community Psychology	Toro (2006); Snow et al. (2000)	Lit. review: Gather literature
	Understanding Sense of Community		
5 Oct	10. Defining Sense of Community	McMillan & Chavis (1986); Galvan 4	Perceptions of community
10 Oct	11. Predictors of Sense of Community	Obst et al. (2002); Galvan 7	
12 Oct	12. College Students and Community	Herrero & Gracia (2004); Galvan 8	

13 Oct	Pacific Northwest Community Psychology Conference (Portland State University)		<i>Extra credit will be given to students who register for and attend this conference</i>
17 Oct	13. Community Building	McNeely (1999); Galvan 9 & 10	Lit. review: Outline (Galvan 8.12.1, p.78)
19 Oct	14. Stressors & Resources of the Homeless	Wong & Piliavin (2001); Galvan 11	Perceptions of professionals
	Preventing Social Problems		
24 Oct	15. Program Evaluation and Development	Dalton et al. (14)	
26 Oct	16. Prevention: Mental Health & Social Intervention	Felner et al. (2000)	<i>Implement Project</i>
31 Oct	17. Peer Evaluation of Literature Review	None	Literature review
2 Nov	18. Institutionalizing Prevention through Policy Change	Pentz (2000); Galvan 12	Dalton steps 1-4 & Qs 1-9
7 Nov	19. Combating Homelessness	Gladwell (2006); Eckholm (2006); Galvan 13	
9 Nov	20. Community Psychology in a National and Global Context	Rappaport (2005); Marsella (1998)	
	Community Participation & Social Change		
14 Nov	21. Motives for Community Involvement	Batson et al. (2002)	Final literature review
16 Nov	22. Challenges of Community Involvement	Jason (2006)	
21 Nov	23. Supporting Diversity	Bond (1999)	Focus group design
No Class	Thanksgiving Break	None	Enjoy!
28 Nov	24. Individual Empowerment	Zimmerman & Rappaport (1988); Becker et al. (2004)	Field work reflection paper
30 Nov	Meet with Lab Groups in Class	None	

5 Dec	25. Social Policy and Community Psychology	Phillips (2000)	
7 Dec	26. Community Psychology: Where do we go from here...?	Toro (2005)	
12 Dec	27. Course Wrap-Up	None	Project Write-Up
TBA	FINAL EXAM		Project Presentations