

**RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY, FACULTY OF ARTS & SCIENCES**

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Course Title: Community Psychology and Community Mental Health (Spring)  
Course No.: 18:830:394  
Meeting Times: Mondays, 8:40 AM - 11:40 AM  
Place: Tillet Hall 257, Livingston Campus  
Instructor: Jeff Brand, Psy.M.  
Office: n/a  
Telephone: 971-227-0142  
Email: jbrand.psychology@gmail.com  
Office Hours: by appointment

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**SYLLABUS OVERVIEW:**

Course Description  
Course Objectives  
Optional Experiential Component  
Class Schedule  
Academic Expectations  
REQ Guidelines  
Extra Credit  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Community psychology (CP) is the branch of psychology most closely associated with how our society produces competent or dysfunctional citizens. It is especially concerned with processes of socialization and the institutions through which our children and youth pass (such as schools and families). This includes the systems we have set up to help people when they have difficulties (i.e., mental health centers, homeless shelters, and

other social/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 and present the key concepts involved. Through the use of examples and “lab activities,” it will 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 a course that is part of RU/CESEP/Collaborative (Rutgers’ Center for Community-Based Research, Service, and Public Scholarship), the perspective taken throughout the course will be one that focuses on the processes that lead to competence, strength, and resilience. We look especially at the role of environments in fostering this growth and why these issues are important to democracy. What can community psychology teach us about raising our children? How can it help us develop and empower our communities? How can we promote disaster prevention and recovery?

This course will focus three major themes: 1) children and schools, 2) poverty and social justice, and 3) international development and disaster recovery. At the end of the course, we’ll ask what each of these three themes can teach us about post-Sandy recovery efforts in New Jersey.

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**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** The goals of the course are that students:

1. Understand the role of social, political, and economic factors in shaping people, organizations and communities— including a community’s approach 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 and community psychology values to the study of interpersonal adaptation and critical community problems (such as child abuse and neglect; achievement gaps in education; substance abuse; delinquency; poverty.)
4. Develop familiarity with various skills necessary for community-related work, including policy analysis, program planning, and public communication.

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**OPTIONAL EXPERIENTIAL COMPONENT:** Interested students can register for a one credit *Public Scholarship and Service Internship/field accompaniment* that provides an opportunity to integrate course learning with a community service placement at Middlesex or Monmouth

County Head Start Centers in New Brunswick, Perth Amboy, Red Bank, Keyport, 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 10 weeks of the semester. ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE FINALIZED IN CLASS IN THE NEXT WEEK OR TWO, AND REGISTRATION WILL TAKE PLACE VIA SPECIAL PERMISSION. There are a large number of openings, but criteria for selection will include a confirmed scheduling match with the openings. There are also requirements for a background check, fingerprinting, and a recent TB test and students must attend the Collaborative orientation, time and location to be determined. Students who have done the Head Start program before may repeat; you will be in a special, “Advanced Head Start/Collaborative” recitation and you may have somewhat more advanced responsibilities than you had previously.

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**CLASS SCHEDULE:**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENTS (DUE DATE)</b>
1/27	Orientation to the Course Intro to Community Psychology <u>Guest:</u> Head Start Orientation	
2/3	Development & Practice of Community Psychology	Kloos, Chapters 1 & 2
2/10	Understanding Individuals in Environments	Kloos Chapter 5 Michie Chapter 1
2/17	Schools & Their Functions <u>Lab:</u> The Neglect of South Carolina’s Public Schools	Haberman 1991, 2004 Tough Chapter 1 <u>optional:</u> Kozol 2005 <b>REQ 1</b>
2/24	Understanding Community Introduce <b>Public Policy Project</b> <b>*Bring in</b> Public Policy Project Overview from Sakai	Kloos Chapter 6
3/3	Prevention & Promotion Public Policy Project Class Time <b>*Listen to</b> “Pre K-O” (Act 4), Episode 477: Getting Away with It <i>This American Life</i> (Oct. 12, 2012) <a href="http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/477/getting-away-with-it?act=4#play">http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/477/getting-away-with-it?act=4#play</a>	Kloos Chapter 9
3/10	Social-Emotional Learning & School Climate <u>Guest:</u> SECD project Public Policy Project Class Time	Durlak, et. al. 2011 Cohen, et. al. 2009 Cherniss, 2000 <b>REQ 2</b>
3/17	Spring Break	

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3/24	Community & Social Change Sargent Shriver Documentary	<b>Public Policy Project Due</b>
3/31	Diversity in Context Exam Review	Kloos Chapter 7 <u>optional</u> : McIntosh
4/7	<b>Mid-Term Exam</b> (first half of class) Guatemala: Never Again! — an Introduction Todos Por el Re-Encuentro <b>Introduce Force Field Project</b> Post-Sandy Community Psychology <b>Bring in 3 Force Field Documents</b> from Sakai	
4/14	Stress & Coping Disaster Prevention & Recovery Force Field Project Class Time	Kloos Chapter 8 Seabrook “The Beach Builders” <b>REQ 3*</b> <b>*to be discussed in groups</b>
4/21	Trauma & Resilience Applying Concepts from Community Psychology Ak’ Tenamit, Barra Lampara, Guatemala Force Field Project Class Time	Rousseau 2005 W. Wilson Center: “After the Disaster,” pgs: 23-47
4/28	Force Field Project Class Time	
5/5	Program Evaluation & Looking Ahead	Kloos Chapter 13 <b>Force Field Project Due!</b>

**ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS:** Evaluations will be based on:

1. *Class Participation:* (15%) 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. (See attendance policy below.)
2. *REQs:* (15%) Summaries of readings are due on posted dates and evaluated for their effort and engagement with the readings. The purpose of these assignments is to demonstrate and deepen your awareness of the material.
3. *Exam:* (25%) One exam will be given. It will be focused on mastery and application of key concepts and issues, as well as important points in the readings not covered in lectures.  
**Exams for this course require Scantron answer sheets, so bring #2 pencil(s) with erasers to all exams.**

**THOSE ARRIVING LATE FOR EXAMS ALSO ARE SUBJECT TO A GRADE-LOWERING PENALTY.**

**Make-Up Exams: A makeup exam will only be allowed under extenuating circumstances.**

4. *Group Projects:* (45%) Students will work in groups to plan and carry out two in-and-out-of-class projects. The first is a Policy Brief Project about poverty and education. The second is a “Force Field Project” that is described elsewhere and requires you to conceptualize approaches to effecting change on a community level.

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**REQ GUIDELINES:**

The REQ assignments are intended to help you a) engage with the reading by reflecting on your thoughts and thinking analytically; and b) to help you gain experience with presenting and sharing information. They should consist of the following:

R = Revelations. Write 5 things that were revelations to you as you read them, noting where in the readings they occurred and how and why they were revelations.

E = Emotional Reactions. Write 3 things that led you to have strong emotional reactions as you read them. **Note where in the text they occurred, what the emotional reactions were, and why you had these reactions.**

Q = Questions. Write 4 questions that occurred to you as you were reading, to which you would like answers, or area with which you had disagreements. Make sure they are thoughtful questions/concerns and not simple factual questions.

REQ’s can be *written in outline form* and you should *number and carefully label each R, E, and Q*. Bring in a hard copy (preferably not hand written) on the day it is due because we usually will work with the write-ups in class. Use space and a half or double spacing so I can write comments on it and help you learn how to use this format well. A typical REQ runs 1.5-3 pages.

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**EXTRA-CREDIT:** Extra-credit options are intended to recognize the additional effort of students who are interested in exploring either a community psychology perspective on an issue that is not presented in class and/or exploring a topic in greater depth. Students may earn extra credit by submitting an additional REQ about a pair of related articles that address a specific topic (i.e., early childhood experience, mental health stigma, or community development in Guatemala). Suggested articles are to be found on the class website on Sakai. If you are interested in a relevant community psychology topic that is not presented, you may request approval of two articles on a topic of your choice. All articles must come from peer-reviewed journals and discuss community psychology principles. Extra-credit will only be given for write-ups about articles that have been approved. **All extra-credit must be submitted by 4/28/14 and will not be accepted after this date.** You may only submit one extra credit assignment, which will be worth the same amount as a regular REQ.

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**ATTENDANCE:** Poor attendance will minimize the likelihood of 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. If missed and not made up, the exam will be considered as a zero.

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**PLAGIARISM & CHEATING:** I regret having to address this topic because I realize that most of you are honest and sincere in approaching your education. In this age of digital cut-and-paste media, plagiarism is becoming all too common, both intentionally and accidentally. All of the Psychology Department has decided to cooperate with regard to reducing 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 are having trouble with the material or an assignment, please see me.

It is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism. If you are not sure whether or not something is plagiarism, please feel free to check with me. For resources about what is and is not plagiarism, (<http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/hc/plagiarism.html>) contains excellent information. Remember, the University and individual faculty use many anti-plagiarism filters on students' work, so the risks are higher than you may think.

**I AM HERE TO HELP YOU LEARN THE COURSE MATERIAL IN ANY WAY I CAN.**

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**TEXTS:** (Available at the Livingston Bookstore):

1. Kloos, B., Hill, J., Thomas, E., Wandersman, A., Elias, M., & Dalton, J. (2011). *Community Psychology: Linking individuals and communities* (3rd Edition). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

3. Materials may be handed out in class and/or materials made available on the class web site. Log in at <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal>

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**SUGGESTED RESOURCES:**

Selected Peer-Reviewed Journals:

American Journal of Community Psychology  
International Journal of Education and Psychology in the Community  
Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology  
Journal of Community Psychology  
Psychology, Community and Health

Society for Community Research & Action (SCRA): <http://www.scra27.org>

Collaborative for Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL): [www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org)

Educational Leadership, publication of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD): <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership.aspx>

Phi Delta Kappa International: <http://pdkintl.org>