

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
Department of Psychology, Faculty of Arts and Sciences

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Course Title: Community Psychology and Community Mental Health (Spring 2016)  
Course No.: 01:830:394:01  
Meeting Times: Tuesdays, 8:40am – 11:40am  
Place: Tillet Hall, 242, Livingston Campus  
Instructor: Ramona Ross  
Telephone: 908-531-2693  
Email: [ramross26@gmail.com](mailto:ramross26@gmail.com)  
Office Hours: By arrangement via email

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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 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 focused on prevention, citizen participation, environmental change, and influencing public policy.

This course will introduce the background and content of community mental health and community psychology. This course will also present key concepts through the use of case examples, relevant current events, and “lab activities,” to 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 course is a CESEP/Collaborative (Rutgers’ Center for Community-Based Research and Service, [engage.rutgers.edu](http://engage.rutgers.edu)) course, the perspective taken throughout the semester 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.

This course will have three major themes: 1) The role society plays in producing competent or dysfunctional citizens beginning from childhood, 2) Mental illness in the community, and 3) Cultural Competence.

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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 the development of community approaches to mental health care, with a focus on civic engagement
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.

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Additional Experience (optional):

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/ Early Childhood Education Centers in New Brunswick, Perth Amboy, Red Bank, Keyport, or other sites in Central New Jersey, or in Trenton. This will involve being assigned to a specific preschool classroom for one morning or afternoon per week for about 10 weeks of the semester. ALL ARRANGEMENTS ARE HANDLED VIA EMAIL, INCLUDING THE SYLLABUS, OPEN SLOTS FOR PLACEMENTS, RECITATION TIMES, AND REGISTRATION AND ORIENTATION DETAILS. 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 this 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.

Please Note:

It is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism, which is becoming all too common, intentionally and accidentally, in this age of digital, cut and paste, copied and relabeled media. <https://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/whatisplagiarism> contains excellent information about plagiarism. If you are not sure whether or not something is plagiarism, please feel free to check with me. It's better to be unoriginal and honest, than to plagiarize. Remember, the University and individual faculty use many anti-plagiarism filters on students' work, so the risks are higher than you may think

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### Class Schedule

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading + Work Due</b>
1/19	Orientation to the course Intro to Community Psych Instructions for Bronfenbrenner assignment.	None
1/26	Principles and Development of Community Psychology	Kloos Ch. 1 <b>Due:</b> Bronfenbrenner's individual analysis
2/02	Understanding Individuals Within Environments	Kloos Ch. 5
2/09	Factors that effect a community. Factors that effect the schools within a community. <b>Silver bullet phenomon, bullying laws, autism/special ed.</b>	Kloos Ch. 6 + "Consultation to Urban Schools" (sakai) <b>REQ 1 DUE - upload via assignment tab on sakai</b>
02/16	Understanding Diversity -What is Cultural Competence? -Immigrant's experience in America. -Introduce Action Letter Assignment	Kloos Ch. 7 "Academic Achievement Among Immigrant and U.S. Born Latino Adolescent" – Santiago et al. (sakai) -Bring Action Letter Description to class
02/23	Mental Illness in the Community -Social Stigmas -Mental Illness in the media	"Mind Over Matter" – Kloos/Townley article (sakai) <b>REQ DUE - upload via assignment tab on sakai</b> <b>-Bring questions about Action Letter Topic to class</b>
03/01	Youth in Communities -Media influence -Peer Influence	"From the Macro to the Micro: A Geographic Examination of the Community Context and Early Adolescent Problem Behaviors" (sakai)
03/08	Community Stress, Coping, Support, and Resiliency. -Case studies: Hurricane Katina, Hurricane Sandy, 9/11	Kloos Ch. 8 + "Capacity Building For Post Disaster Mental Health, Since Katrina" (sakai) <b>Action Letter Due</b>
03/15	Spring Break! Enjoy!	
03/22	Poverty in America	"Pedagogy of Poverty" (sakai) + "Confections of Apartheid" (sakai)
03/29	Sargent Shriver Documentary + Mid Term Exam Review	Bring in Review Questions Review Sargent Shriver website:

		<a href="http://www.sargentshriver.org">http://www.sargentshriver.org</a>
04/05	<b>Exam</b> + Introduce Group Project	Bring Policy Brief Guidelines to class
04/12	Group Project Time	Bring Policy Brief materials
04/19	Community Level Interventions -Community needs assessment -Logic Model -Prevention Equations	Kloos Ch. 13
04/26	Course Review & Wrap up Share Group Projects	<b>Group Projects Due</b>

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**Academic Expectations:** Evaluations will be based on:

1. Class Participation: (15pts) 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.

**Students will receive credit for class attendance and participation after submitting that week's lab via the assignment feature on sakai. WEEKLY lab submissions are due Fridays by 5pm. There will be NO exceptions.**

**PLEASE NOTE:** It is YOUR responsibility to check the class sakai site for materials, announcements, and assignment due dates.

2. 2 REQs + Bronfenbrenner Assignment: (15pts) Summaries of readings are due on the posted dates by **8:40am**. You will upload your assignments via the assignment feature on sakai. These summaries will be evaluated on the amount of effort put forth and should demonstrate analytical thinking.

2. Exams: (25pts) 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.

**The exam for this course requires Scantron answer sheets, so bring #2 pencil(s) with erasers to the exam.**

3. Action Letter: (25pts) Students will compose an Action Letter written to a community leader, media outlet or other appropriate source providing insight and/or solutions to a community problem or issue.

4. Group Project: (20pts) Students will work in groups to plan and carry out a Web Quest/ Policy Brief about coping with the impact of poverty on education and mental health.

**ACTION LETTERS ARE DUE 03/08. Group Projects Due 04/26**

Further details about the projects will be provided in separate handouts on sakai.

**Late** assignments can be handed in by the next class for half credit. Labs cannot be made up.

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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, and/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 1.5-2 pages.

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: A makeup exam will only be allowed under extenuating circumstances.

If missed and not made up, the exam will be considered as a zero.

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

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 are having trouble with the material or an assignment, see me. I am here to help you learn the course material in any way that I can.

Texts (Available at the Livingston Bookstore):

1. Kloos, B., & Associates. (2011). *Community Psychology: Linking individuals and communities* (3rd Edition). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
2. Articles and additional required materials available on the class sakai site. <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal/site/62f1ece5-cfe3-419b-aeb0-345dab3ed3a3>