Special Topics: An Introduction to Community Psychology
PSY 400.001
TR 12:00-1:15 p.m.
Rice Library 0001

INSTRUCTOR: Amie R. McKibban, PhD
OFFICE: Liberal Arts 3099
OFFICE HOURS: [to be announced]
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EMAIL: armckibban@usi.edu or a_mckibban@yahoo.com

REQUIRED TEXT:

RECOMMENDED TEXT:

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course will cover the basic theories and concepts that define the field of community psychology while incorporating real-life examples of community action and research. Topics covered include (but are not limited to) the guiding principles of community psychology, ecological theory, empowerment theory, social capital, community organizing, social policy, civic engagement, cyclical approaches to change, and levels of prevention. Students will also learn about the principles of research that guide community psychologists, including traditional research methods, qualitative research methods, consulting, program evaluation, and participatory action research.

All of you live in a community; further, all of you know something about psychology. Community psychology puts the two together. The basic goal is simple: To apply principles of psychology to community settings to more fully understand them, and often times, to make them better. As in any other field, community psychology has guiding principles of its own. To understand these principles, and to apply them in practice, can be challenging, insightful, helpful to others, and personally enjoyable. If you work at it, you may see these results for yourself as you progress through the course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
By the end of the course, the following objectives will have been met:

- Students will illustrate an understanding of the connection between behavior and environment, as what is meant by person-environment fit.
- Students will learn to assess an environment and its influence on those living within that environment from an ecological perspective.
- Students will understand the role of empowerment, social capital, opportunity, strengths, and civic engagement in creating effective and sustainable change.

This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.
✓ Students will illustrate the role of formative and summative evaluation in creating and sustaining community based initiatives.
✓ Students will discuss bottom-up and top-down approaches to change, and participate in this cyclical relationship.
✓ Students will discuss the importance of culture-specific initiatives in creating change, as well as participate in collaborative efforts in meeting the needs of under-served populations.
✓ Students will understand the political influences on prevention efforts and be able to discuss strategies in working with groups who have differing viewpoints within the same initiative.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION
One of your primary responsibilities in this class is to be here every class period. Given this is a service learning course, and subsequently small in size, attendance is essential for the learning process and your academic achievement. Your thoughtful and complete preparation and participation in this class is necessary for this course to be successful. Remember, you are representing USI in the community. In short, class attendance is expected and required. Attendance will reflect in your over-all course grade by utilizing the following criteria:

✓ 2-minute in-class reflections: 5 points each for a total of 50 points. These points may not be made up if missed. See the course schedule for a list of days when you will be expected to give an in-class reflection.

✓ Attendance is expected and will account for 5 points of your overall grade (for a total of 75 points) on the following days. These points may not be made up if missed.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Important items &amp; due dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 09/07</td>
<td>Chapter 1 wrap-up</td>
<td>In-class Q&amp;A session</td>
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<td>Community partners class visit</td>
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<td>Tuesday, 09/21</td>
<td>Chapter 4: Conducting focus groups</td>
<td>Observation write-up due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 09/28</td>
<td>Chapter 5 wrap-up &amp; Chapter 6:</td>
<td>Focus group exercise</td>
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<td>Understanding community</td>
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<td>Tuesday, 10/12</td>
<td>Chapter 9 wrap-up</td>
<td>Focus group preparation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 10/19</td>
<td>Chapter 12: Citizen participation &amp; Empowerment</td>
<td>Focus group preparation</td>
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<td>Tuesday, 10/26</td>
<td>Chapter 13: More on social change</td>
<td>Lessons learned in-class discussion</td>
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<td>Thursday, 10/28</td>
<td>Community partners class visit</td>
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<td>Tuesday, 11/16</td>
<td>Survey development</td>
<td>In class group work</td>
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<td>Thursday, 11/18</td>
<td>Survey development</td>
<td>In class group work</td>
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<td>Tuesday, 11/30</td>
<td>Real-world applications</td>
<td>In class group work</td>
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<td>Thursday, 12/02</td>
<td>Real-world applications</td>
<td>Individual reflection due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 12/07</td>
<td>Real-world applications</td>
<td>In class group work</td>
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<td>Thursday, 12/09</td>
<td>Wrap-up discussion &amp; reflection</td>
<td>In class group work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday, 12/11</td>
<td>Commencement</td>
<td>In class group work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 12/14</td>
<td>Community partners class visit</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
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SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT & RELATED ASSIGNMENTS:
This is an experiential course, and accordingly, you will be expected to develop real-world skills associated with the material being learned in the traditional classroom setting. In order to achieve this, we will be working with the YMCA outreach program coordinators at the Caldwell branch throughout the semester. The benefit of working with community partners is two-fold: You will benefit as students in developing real-world, marketable skills (this will aid in making you more competitive on the job market and/or in applying to graduate school) and the community partners will have assistance in developing a tangible product they need. In short, both parties will mutually benefit from this experience. A complete project description and time line will be handed out on the first day of class. The requirements and assignments associated with this project are as follows:

ON-SITE OBSERVATION (INDIVIDUAL WORK): 50 points
You will be expected to visit the YMCA Caldwell branch and observe the setting for 30 minutes sometime between Monday, September 13th and Thursday, September 16th. Following the observation, you will be expected to hand in a written observation report. A detailed rubric describing what is expected in the write-up will be handed out in class.

FOCUS GROUPS (GROUP TASK WITH INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION): 50 points
Each of you will be work with one another in peer groups to conduct a focus group with one of three groups the Caldwell Outreach Branch serves: elderly community, adolescent (middle & high school) community, and parents. This will be completed mid-October on-site at the Caldwell branch. I will be at each focus group to observe each group member, and the success of the group as a whole. The focus group will take approximately 1 hour.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY DEVELOPMENT: 100 points
With the information gathered from the focus groups, each peer group will be responsible for producing a survey instrument that the community partners can utilize to gather more in-depth information from community members that will aid in program development. As with the focus groups, this will be a group task; however, your individual performance will be evaluated.

PRESENTATIONS: 50 points
Each group will present information on their project during the time allotted for the final exam. These presentations will include information on what was done, lessons learned, insights you had with regard to community psychology, and will illustrate your understanding of community psychology as an applied field. Our community members will be present to watch and ask questions the day of the presentations. Again, this is a group task, but your individual performance and contribution will be the basis of your grade.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION: 50 points
Lastly, you will have the opportunity to reflect on your own experience with service learning and civic engagement as it relates to the goals of the course. A detailed rubric that will guide you in this reflection will be provided in class. This will be an ongoing assignment that you will work on throughout the course of the semester.

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STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT
All of you are expected to be familiar with your rights and responsibilities with regard to participating in a service learning course. The student code of conduct handbook may be found at http://www.usi.edu/stl/forms/CodeApril2009.pdf

EXAMINATIONS:
There will be one 150 point exam throughout the course of the semester. The exam will contain material covered in the previous class sessions, including material from the textbook, class discussions, and lectures. Missed exams may be made up, but will be in essay form. Exams should only be missed in extenuating circumstances (e.g., family death, accident, severe illness, etc.). Extenuating circumstances will be discussed with the instructor on a one-to-one basis. Please contact the instructor prior to the exam.

EVALUATION AND GRADING
Evaluation and grades will be based upon satisfactory completion of the course requirements. Final course grades will be based on the following scale, with 67%, 77%, and 87% being the cut-off for a (+):

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>575-517</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>516-460</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>459-402</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>401-345</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>344-0</td>
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<td>Attendance</td>
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<td>Exam</td>
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<td>Project Requirements</td>
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ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICY
USI Policy on Academic Dishonesty
Students who compromise the integrity of the classroom are subject to disciplinary action on the part of the University. Violations of classroom standards include, but are not limited to:

a. Cheating in any form, whether in formal examinations or elsewhere.
b. Plagiarism, using the work of others as one’s own without assigning proper credit to the source.
c. Misrepresentation of any work done in the classroom or in preparation for class.
d. Falsification, forgery, or alteration of any documents pertaining to academic records.
e. Disruptive behavior in a course of study or abusiveness toward faculty or fellow students.

For a full version of the policy, see http://www.usi.edu/stl/forms/academicdishonestypolicy.pdf

A standard of honesty, fairly applied to all students, is essential to a learning environment. Students violating such standards must accept the consequences; penalties are assessed by appropriate classroom instructors or other designated people. Serious causes may result in discipline at the college or University level and may result in suspension or dismissal. Dismissal from a college for academic dishonesty constitutes dismissal from the University.

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Students accused of abridging a standard of honesty may protect themselves through established academic appeal procedures and are assured of due process and the right of appeal from accusations or penalties felt to be unjust.

*Department of Psychology Guidelines on Academic Dishonesty*

All penalties for violation of the Academic Honesty Policy will be determined and defined for each class by the individual Psychology faculty member and/or instructor. Prior to said determination it would be advisable to consult with the Undergraduate Coordinator and/or Department Chairperson.

The instructor of the particular course reserves the right to fail the student on any exam or assignment if caught partaking in academic dishonesty. The instructor also reserves the right to submit a failing course grade if deemed necessary.

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT COMPLIANCE**

If you have a disability, you are encouraged to register for disability support services in the Counseling Center ([http://www.usi.edu/cou/Services.asp](http://www.usi.edu/cou/Services.asp)). If you require an accommodation, please advise the instructor by the end of the first week of class. You may be required to provide written documentation to support these accommodations. The instructor will work with you to provide reasonable accommodations to ensure that you have a fair opportunity to perform and participate in class.

In order to qualify for disability services students must present written evidence from a qualified professional verifying their disability to the Director of ODS. All documentation received is confidential and will be kept in the Director’s office. The federal definition is as follows:

A person with a disability (i) has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person’s major life activities (ii) has a record of such impairment; or (iii) is regarded as having such impairment

Major life activities include functions such as caring for one’s self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working.

**CLASSROOM DISCUSSIONS AND INTERACTIONS**

The instructor of this course encourages all students to offer insights and ideas regarding any topic in question or discussion. Drawing on perspectives and references that reflect all viewpoints, cultures, and lifestyles will make this course insightful and enlightening for all. If at anytime the instructor feels that a student is being disrespectful, she will ask the student to leave the class and not return.

**ELECTRONICS POLICY**

Absolutely no electronics are allowed to be on during class hours unless otherwise indicated (this includes laptops). The instructor holds the right to answer and/or confiscate any cell phones, pagers, etc., that go off during class.

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HELPFUL COMMUNITY LINKS

http://www.volunteermatch.org/
Volunteermatch will search the local data base of non-profit organizations. This is a useful way to research community meetings, prevention efforts, etc.

http://www.unitedwayswi.org/
United way of Southwestern Indiana. A great resource for community work in serving underserved populations. Will also help in researching community groups, populations, neighborhoods, meetings, etc.

http://www.evscschools.com/
Area school board. If your interest lies within public education, this is the site for you. School board meetings and the school community council will be great outlets for projects.

www.vanderburghgov.org/
Vanderburgh county website has a ton of information regarding local resources. Simply type in “self help groups” in the search box and browse.
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