



# OTRP *online*

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## **PSYC 375I: Community Psychology**

**California State University at Long Beach  
Fall 2006**

**Class session:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11-12:15  
Psychology Building, room 155

**Instructor:** Courtney Ahrens, Ph.D.  
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Beachboard: Psy 375-Community Psychology

Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30-2PM  
Wednesdays 1-2PM

### **Course Description**

This course provides a basic overview of the field of community psychology. The class will cover the basic theories and concepts that define the field while incorporating real-life examples of community action and research. Students will become acquainted with concepts central to community psychology, including: a) social oppression; b) victim blaming; c) ecological theory; d) empowerment theory; e) stress and coping; f) social support; g) community organizing; h) social policy analysis; and i) prevention. Students will also learn about the principles of research that guide community psychologists, including: a) traditional research methods; b) qualitative research methods; c) consulting; d) program evaluation; and e) participatory action research. Finally, students will learn how these concepts are applied to a wide range of contemporary social issues including: a) homelessness; b) child abuse; c) teen pregnancy; d) substance abuse; e) sexual health; f) education; g) juvenile delinquency; and h) interpersonal violence. Emphasis will be placed on working with economically disadvantaged, minorities, women, and youth. Videos and in-class activities will supplement the readings.

### **Anticipated Learning Outcomes**

Students who have successfully completed this course should be able to...

1. Identify and apply the theories and methods of Community Psychology.
2. Compare and contrast Community Psychology to other sub-disciplines of Psychology and Social Work.
3. Identify and analyze the causes of contemporary social problems.
4. Understand the intersection of racism, sexism, and classism with social problems.
5. Identify and create social change techniques to address social problems at the individual, family, organizational, community, and societal levels.
6. Identify ethnically appropriate interventions for people of diverse backgrounds.
7. Design evaluation strategies to assess intervention and prevention program effectiveness.

### **Prerequisites**

- Completion of Foundation Courses
- Psychology 100
- Upper Division Standing

## Assigned Readings

A *custom text* has been created for this course and may be purchased at the bookstore.

Community Psychology (2<sup>nd</sup> custom edition). Boston, MA: Pearson Custom Publishing.

Three additional articles are also required and may be purchased as a *course packet* at the bookstore.

Ryan, W. (1976). The art of savage discovery: How to blame the victim. Blaming the Victim. New York, NY: Random House.

Alinsky, S.D. (1971). Tactics. Rules for Radicals. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

McIntosh, P. (1990). White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack.

## Grading criteria

Students will be expected to complete two papers addressing a contemporary social problem. These papers will build upon one another, culminating in a final paper that incorporates instructor feedback. Students will also give a group lecture on their final paper findings and create a poster presentation about a community organization that addresses the social problem they selected. There will also be a mid-semester exam and a final exam consisting of both multiple choice and essay questions. In addition, students are expected to participate regularly in class. Participation will be assessed by periodic in-class exercises and assignments. Each of these assignments is described in detail at the end of the syllabus. The percentage of each assignment towards the final grade is as follows:

<u>Assignment</u>		<u>Grading Scale</u>
Paper #1	15% (150 points)	A = 90-100% (900-1,000 points)
Paper #2	20% (200 points)	B = 80-89% (800-899 points)
Exam	20% (200 points)	C = 70-79% (700-799 points)
Exam	20% (200 points)	D = 60-69% (600-699 points)
Group Lecture	10% (100 points)	F = below 59% (599 points or less)
Poster Presentation	5% (50 points)	
<u>Participation</u>	<u>10% (100 points)</u>	
TOTAL	100% (1,000 points)	

## Policy on late assignments and missed exams

*Students are expected to attend each class, turn in assignments on time, and complete the exams on the scheduled date.*

- Failure to attend class during the class exercises will result in a grade of 0 for that assignment.
- Failure to turn in the papers at the *beginning* of class on the day they are due will result in a full letter grade deduction. An additional letter grade will be deducted for each day the paper is late (i.e., a paper that is due on Tuesday but isn't turned in until later that day starts at a "B"; if it isn't turned in until Wednesday, it starts at a "C"; if it isn't turned in until Thursday, it starts at a "D")
- Failure to complete the exams on the scheduled date will result in a grade of 0 on that exam.

*If the student is incapacitated or otherwise faced with extreme, uncontrollable circumstances that prohibit his/her timely completion of the assignment (e.g., you are hospitalized, were in a car accident, or a family member died), it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor prior to the due date of the assignment and provide supporting documentation (e.g., hospital bill, police report, death certificate).*

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### Aug. 29: Introduction

### Aug. 31: Principles & History of Community Psychology

*Required Readings:* Chapter 1

### Sept. 5: Writing in Psychology

### Sept. 7: Blaming the Victim

*Required Readings:* Ryan article

### Sept. 12: System Levels, Ecological Theory

*Required Readings:* Chapter 20

### Sept. 14: Race and Diversity

*Required Readings:* Chapter 13

*In-Class Video:* The Power of an Illusion

### Sept. 19: Culture and Ethnic Identity

*Required Readings:* Chapter 14

### Sept. 21: Folk Healing

*Required Readings:* Chapters 16

**DUE: Paper #1**

*In-Class Video:* Spirit Doctors

### Sept. 26: Ethnically Appropriate Interventions

*Required Readings:* Chapters 15

*In-Class Video:* A World of Difference

### Sept. 28: EXAM #1

### Oct. 3: Prevention

*Required Readings:* Chapter 4

*In-Class Video:* An Ounce of Prevention

### Oct. 5: Prevention

### Oct. 10: Empowerment & Community Development

*Required Readings:* Chapter 3

### Oct. 12: Community Organizing & Activism

*Required Readings:* Chapter 21

*In-Class Video:* Democratic promise: Saul Alinsky & his legacy

### Oct. 17: Community Activism

*Required Readings:* Alinsky article

### Oct. 19: Societal Change

*Required Readings:* Chapter 22

**Oct. 24: Program Evaluation***Required Readings:* Chapter 2**Oct. 26: EXAM #2****Oct. 31: Stress and Coping***Required Readings:* Chapter 5**Nov. 2: Group Meetings****DUE:** *Paper #2***Nov. 7: Poverty****Nov. 9: Oppression***Required Readings:* McIntosh article**DUE:** *Draft of Presentation**In-Class Video:* ABC Primetime**Nov. 14: Immigration***Required Readings:* Chapters 18*In-Class Video:* Lost Boys of Sudan**Nov. 16: Homelessness***Required Readings:* Chapters 7*Group Presentation***Nov. 21 : Teen Pregnancy***Group Presentations***Nov. 28: Child Abuse***Group Presentations***Nov. 30: Substance Abuse and Other Health Problems***Required Readings:* Chapter 11*Group Presentation***Dec. 5: Juvenile Delinquency and Gangs***Required Readings:* Chapters 9*Group Presentation***Dec. 7: Rape***Group Presentation***Dec. 12: Domestic Violence***Group Presentation***Dec. 14: Poster Fair****Dec. 21: EXAM # 3 (10:15-12:15)**

## Assignments

### Paper Assignments

There are two paper assignments due throughout the semester. These papers are designed to build upon each other such that the second paper includes a revision of the first paper. On the first day of class, students will be given a list of social problems. They will rank-order their paper topic preferences and will be assigned a paper topic on that day. In the first paper, students will research the definition and prevalence of the problem. In the second paper, they will build upon this first paper by reviewing research on the causes of this social problem. Detailed descriptions of each of these papers are provided below:

#### Paper # 1.

Due date: September 21

Format: Minimum of 3 pages, double spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins, APA style

Topic: Definition and Prevalence of the Problem

Content: You will be assigned a paper topic based on your rank-ordered preferences on the first day of class. You should now conduct a literature search to obtain information on the legal and research definition of the problem. How has the problem been defined by researchers or the law (NOT dictionaries, encyclopedias, or websites)? Be specific and comprehensive. Even definitions that seem self-evident require clarification (e.g., how can you tell the difference between substance use and substance abuse? Does teenage pregnancy include intended pregnancy or abortions? Are people who “couch surf” with friends or live in cars considered homeless? Is psychological abuse a form of child abuse or domestic violence? Is it still rape if the victim doesn’t say no? How does a gang differ from other groups such as fraternities?). Provide detailed definitions that include various forms of the problem (e.g., types of substance abuse, types of rape, types of child abuse, etc.) and fully describe the range of experiences that would be included in the definition. Be sure to provide research citations for every idea stated as fact.

After defining the problem, research the prevalence of the problem (e.g., how common is it? how many people experience it? who experiences it?). Provide percentages and numbers that specify both national averages as well as demographic characteristics of people who experience the problem (i.e., race/ethnic distribution, age distribution, gender distribution, socioeconomic distribution, regional distribution, etc.). Be sure to provide research citations for all of your statistics (note: you may use governmental reports that you find on an official governmental website ending in .gov, but you must read the actual report – not the press briefing – and you must cite the actual report, not the website).

Keep in mind that this is a research paper rather than an opinion paper. Avoid stating your own opinions as facts and make sure to cite all information you state as fact in APA style (i.e., each sentence stated as fact must be cited). Refer to class handouts on writing clarity and APA style as you write this paper (remember – Psychology papers almost never include direct quotes, so be sure to paraphrase all of your information and cite it accordingly). Be sure to use proper APA style throughout, including a title page, reference section, text citations, and headers/subheaders. Also consider taking a draft to the Writing Center or having a friend review a draft to help improve organization, grammar, and clarity (note: the writing center requires an appointment, often weeks in advance).

#### Grading Criteria: 150 points

- Definition of social problem (50 points)
- Prevalence of social problem (50 points)
- Writing Quality (grammar, clarity, organization) (25 points)
- APA style (citations, references, manuscript) (25 points)

**Paper # 2.**

Due date: November 2

Format: Minimum of 8 pages, double spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins, APA style

Topic: Etiology of the Problem

Content: You should first revise your earlier paper on the definitions and prevalence of the problem, incorporating the feedback that you were provided. You will then add on a section about the etiology of the problem (e.g., what causes the problem? Which individual, group, organization, community, or social conditions contribute to the existence of this problem?)

To research the causes of the problem, locate and copy at least 6 research articles that identify causes at the individual/family/peer group, organization, community, and societal levels (note: using the keywords “ecological” and your social problem will help you find useful articles). These articles must come from academic journals (NO websites, textbooks, newspaper articles, or magazine articles). The majority of these articles should be actual studies, but you may use up to 2 books, literature reviews, or governmental documents. Although you may use empirical articles from any relevant discipline, articles from Community Psychology journals may be particularly helpful (e.g., American Journal of Community Psychology, Journal of Community Psychology).

As you read through these articles on the causes of the problem, use the worksheet distributed in class to keep track of the various causes you discover. Be sure to include 2-3 causes from these articles at each level. This worksheet will help you organize your paper. Each row will be a subheader in your paper (e.g., individual/family/peer group level, organizational level, community level, and societal level). Under each subheader, you will discuss the causes you listed on the worksheet in detail, making sure to provide citations for each cause you discuss. Make sure to explain each cause rather than just listing it – *why* does it lead to your social problem?

Keep in mind that this is a research paper rather than an opinion paper. Avoid stating your own opinions as facts and make sure to cite all information you state as fact in APA style (i.e., each sentence stated as fact must be cited). Use the articles you are reading as a guide for the appropriate tone (imagine you are trying to educate an intelligent audience who is unfamiliar with your particular topic). Avoid direct quotes but be sure to fully paraphrase all information you obtain from these articles (refer to class handouts on plagiarism). You will submit the final version of this paper to turnitin.com, so it is in your best interest to pay close attention to paraphrasing. Refer to class handouts on writing clarity and APA style as you write this paper.

Grading Criteria: 200 points

- Description of the social problem to be addressed (25 points)
- Prevalence of the problem (25 points)
- Etiology of the problem
  - Individual/Family/Peer (25 points)
  - Organizational (25 points)
  - Community (25 points)
  - Societal (25 points)
- Writing Quality (grammar, clarity, organization) (25 points)
- APA style (citations, references, manuscript style) (25 points)

**Group Lecture**

Students who wrote about the same paper topic will work together to teach a class on their social problem. Students will teach the class on the day assigned to the topic on the syllabus. Students will utilize the entire class period to create a lecture about the social problem. This lecture should provide a precise definition and prevalence statistics as well as all of the major causes of the social problem, organized by system level. In addition to creating a lecture,

students should use relevant video clips or skits to bring the topic to life. Students should also create group activities (which should take no more than 20 minutes).

To create the lecture, students will meet as a group in class on NOVEMBER 2. It is extremely important that everyone attend class this day. If you are absent during the planning process, you will receive a lower grade on this assignment. As a group, you should share the definitions, prevalence statistics, and causes that were included in each person's paper. Starting with the Definition, make a list of all of the definitions that were discussed in the papers, collapsing definitions when duplication occurs and expanding the definition when necessary (note: it would be very helpful if someone in your group brought a laptop to class so you could work directly on the computer). Then move on to your statistics. List all of the percentages that were discovered and try to identify the most commonly cited statistics. If you discover wildly discrepant statistics, try to figure out why and either explain this discrepancy to the class or conduct further research to determine which numbers are most accurate. Next, move on to your causes. Starting with the Individual/Family/Peer level, make a list of all of the individual/family/peer causes that were discussed in the papers, collapsing similar categories. Repeat this process for each level. Once you have created complete lists for your definition, prevalence statistics, and causes, call me over (or email these lists to me) so I can give you feedback.

Once you have obtained my feedback, it is time to start working on the presentation. First discuss the logical ordering of causes (e.g., similar topics should follow one another) and create a visual display (refer to class handouts on how to create Powerpoint slides that are clear, precise, and legible). If you assign different slides to different people, make sure to decide on the format ahead of time. All of the slides should look identical in terms of font and spacing. Assigning one person to be in charge usually helps. Once you have a draft ready, email the Powerpoint presentation to me. This is due by NOVEMBER 9. I will then send you feedback so you can revise your slides accordingly. Once you have completed a final revision, email me your final version TWO DAYS BEFORE your presentation. I will then post your presentation on Beachboard so students can download your slides before class.

Once you have created your Powerpoint presentation, it is time to work on the oral portion of your presentation. First, determine who will actually present each topic. Each person in your group must speak for roughly the same amount of time, so divide the speaking roles accordingly. Once you have assigned speakers, help one another figure out exactly what they will say. Remember that you are giving a lecture to the class, not to me (i.e., the rest of the class probably doesn't know anything about your topic, so make sure to explain things clearly, speak slowly, and use examples where applicable). The class will be tested on what you say, so make sure you explain things in a way that everyone can understand – you don't want them resenting you when they encounter a question on the exam! Also make sure to speak slowly enough for students to take notes. At the same time, don't make your lecture too boring. Try to emulate the style of the professors you've enjoyed (not the ones who make you fall asleep!). Include videos, skits, pictures, class exercises, and class discussions to bring the topic to life (hint: a useful class activity would be to have students envision interventions for the causes you discussed). Above all else, try to have fun with this! Your fellow classmates really are rooting for you to succeed.

Your grade for the lecture will be a combination of your group's grade (assessing the quality of the lecture, PowerPoint slides, visual materials, and class activity), your own grade (assessing the quality of your presentation style), and your group's evaluation of your contribution to the presentation (based on written forms you will all fill out about one another's contribution). See below for the grading criteria:

Grading Criteria: 100 points

- Group Grade
  - Quality of Definition (5 points)
  - Extensiveness of Statistics (5 points)
  - Inclusiveness of Individual/Family/Peer Level Causes (5 points)
  - Inclusiveness of Organizational Level Causes (5 points)
  - Inclusiveness of Community Level Causes (5 points)
  - Inclusiveness of Societal Level Causes (5 points)

- Quality of Visual Displays (10 points)
- Quality of Class Activity (10 points)
- Your Grade
  - Clear Presentation (10 points)
  - Engaging Presentation (10 points)
- Group Evaluation of Your Contribution (30 points)

### **Poster Presentation**

Each student will locate and research a Southern California community organization that addresses the social problem they wrote about in their paper. Choose an agency that is well-established with an identifiable location, staff, and structure. Locate information about the agency's mission, goals, programs, and activities. This information is typically provided in brochures and written information distributed at the agency. If allowed, you can also take photographs of the agency to display in your poster presentation. Once you have obtained information about the agency, create a poster (standard poster board or larger) that describes the agency, its goals, the services it provides, and volunteer opportunities. Use large writing and images that can be seen clearly from at least 5 feet away. Make sure to name the agency in large writing at the top and provide contact information about the agency. Also make sure to put your own name on the poster.

These posters will be displayed in the courtyard of the Psychology Building during class on DECEMBER 14. The posters will be hung on the outer walls of the stairwells (I will bring clips). During the poster presentation, each student will be given an evaluation sheet that they will use to describe and critique the programs described in other students' posters. The final grade for this assignment will be a combination of the grade you receive for your poster and the grade you receive for your critique of other students' posters. See below for the grading criteria:

#### **Grading Criteria: 50 points**

- Poster Grade
  - Name & Contact Info of Program (5 points)
  - Mission of Program (5 points)
  - Detailed Program/Activity Descriptions (5 points)
  - Volunteer Opportunities (5 points)
  - Format & Creativity (size, clarity, visual appeal) (10 points)
- Poster Critiques
  - Description of programs (10 points)
  - Critique of programs (10 points)

### **Exams**

There are three exams, but students may drop their lowest exam score (or choose not to take one exam). These exams are NOT cumulative and consist only of material covered up until that point. The exams consist of both multiple choice and short answer questions. Study guides and sample questions will be provided prior to each exam.

- Exam #1:*** Feb. 23  
***Exam #2:*** Mar. 21  
***Exam #3:*** Thursday, May 18 10:15-12:15

### **Class Exercises.**

There will be periodic in-class activities and assignments designed to increase student involvement and monitor student comprehension of course concepts. These activities may include response cards (brief written responses to the readings or lecture), guided video worksheets (questions about videos presented in class), guided group discussions, or guided group demonstrations/activities. At the end of the exercise, you will turn in your completed hand-outs



(including each group participant's signature) to be marked as completed or not. Participating in these class exercises will count as your participation grade.

### **UNIVERSITY WITHDRAWAL POLICY:**

It is the student's responsibility to withdraw from classes. Instructors have no obligation to withdraw students who do not attend courses, and may choose not to do so.

**The deadline to withdraw from a class without a "W" is Monday, September 11, 2006.**

Withdrawal from a course with a "W" after the first 2 weeks of instruction is permissible only for serious and compelling reasons and requires the signature of the instructor and the department chair. **The university deadline to withdraw from classes in Spring, 2006 is Friday, Nov. 17.**

AFTER Nov. 17:

DURING THE LAST THREE WEEKS OF INSTRUCTION (Nov. 17 through Dec. 15), YOU MAY NOT DROP (WITHDRAW FROM) A CLASS EXCEPT FOR A VERY SERIOUS REASON THAT IS CLEARLY BEYOND YOUR CONTROL, SUCH AS INJURY OR ACCIDENT (**WHICH MUST BE DOCUMENTED**). USUALLY, SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES MEAN THAT YOU WILL BE WITHDRAWING FROM ALL YOUR CLASSES. YOU WILL NEED THE APPROVAL OF THE COLLEGE DEAN AS WELL AS THAT OF THE CLASS INSTRUCTOR AND DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSON FOR EACH CLASS YOU DROP.

**The College of Liberal Arts adheres to this policy strictly, and does not sign withdrawal forms in the final three weeks of instruction for other reasons.**