

COURSE SYLLABUS FOR COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY
PSY 3450; Winter Session- On line Class
Room 211 Werner Hall

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Text: Community Psychology: Linking Individuals and Communities (3rd Ed.). Kloos, Hill, Wandersman, Elias & Dalton (2012).

Course Objectives:

- a. Provide an understanding of what community psychology is and how it compares to other sub-disciplines of psychology and other social sciences.
- b. Develop students' knowledge of community psychology's history and theories.
- c. Link theories to practices through exemplary research and interventions.
- d. Foster students' ability to integrate theoretical frameworks into their future practices.
- e. Critically analyze the role of psychologists within social settings.
- f. Increase students' critical thinking skills.
- g. Increase students' ability to ask important and relevant questions that elaborate psychological concepts and ideas and are applied to social change.
- h. Analyze the meaning of change in social settings.
- i. Promote a sense of social responsibility
6. Topical Outline of Course Content

Your grade will be based on three assignments totally 100 points.

Course Outline: Classes begin 12/22/14 and ends 1/11/15

Week 1	Topic 1 What is Community Psychology? Community psychology defined and differentiated from other fields within psychology and other social sciences.	(Chapter 1)
	Topic 2 The Ecological Perspective Review of the ecological model in psychology, levels of analysis and intervention.	(Chapter 5)
Week 2	Topic 3 Understanding Community/Sense of Community Elements of and the importance of a sense of community and social capital, and building communities.	(Chapter 6)
	Topic 4 Coping and Social Support Ecological-contextual model of stress and coping, social support, mutual help groups, spirituality.	(Chapter 8)

Week 3	Topic 5 Prevention and Promotion: Key Concepts Prevention and the medical model. The relationship between prevention and promotion. Risk and resiliency.	(Chapter 9)
	Topic 6 Prevention and Promotion: Implementing Programs Examples of successful prevention and promotion programs.	(Chapter 10)

Assignments must be well developed and include a cover and reference page.

Assignment 1 due the first week of class-50 points

Ecological Assessment of a Setting

Chapter 5 presents ecological concepts and research at a number of levels of analysis. In this exercise, you will analyze a setting at the microsystem or organization level.

To begin, choose a behavior setting. As defined by Barker and associates, a behavior setting must have:

- a physical time and place,
- clear boundaries of space or time to separate it from other settings,
- a standing pattern of behavior.

This may involve a microsystem or organization; choose a behavior setting other than your immediate family. Choose a setting carefully: one that you know well from personal experience, preferably one that you can observe now. You may choose a setting from your past experience if you remember it very well. Choose one that involves at least 10 people (an arbitrary rule of thumb to ensure enough roles and members to analyze). Some examples include a class, student organization, playground, residence hall wing or unit, small workplace, social club, or religious congregation (or group within it such as a choir or class).

Analyze the setting in terms of each section below. Observing the setting again is a good idea. Doing this with a friend is often more fun.

Physical Setting Describe the setting's natural, architectural, and furnishing features: its location, size, boundaries, arrangement of space, furniture (and whether it is movable), pathways of travel, greenery (if outdoors). At what times is it used? Is it ever crowded, or empty? Can you describe its "atmosphere" as a physical setting?

Can you suggest useful changes in the physical features of the setting?

Behavior Setting This part uses concepts drawn from Barker's theory of behavior settings.

Describe the setting's program or standing pattern(s) of behavior. Be as detailed as you can. How many persons are involved? Is there high turnover of persons (e.g., a retail store, playground) or low turnover (e.g., first-grade class)?

Define the goal circuits of the setting. That is, describe the most common goals that a person might pursue in this setting. Another way to think about this: What reinforcements do persons seek in this setting?

Finally, consider how this setting is related to other behavior settings. Is it part of a larger organization? Does it relate directly to other behavior settings?

Underpopulated and Optimally Populated Settings Does the setting seem optimally populated or underpopulated? Slightly or very much so?

If the setting seems optimally populated, does it exclude a number of persons who would otherwise be likely to participate (vetoing circuits)? Does it tend to involve individuals only in specialized roles?

If the setting seems underpopulated, does it involve persons in a variety of roles? Does anyone play two or more roles? Are roles left unfilled? How actively does it recruit participants? Do persons in the setting take time to teach members how to play their roles (deviation-countering circuits)? How strong is the commitment of setting participants to this setting?

Can you suggest useful changes in these practices to create more of the benefits of underpopulated settings?

Population/Structural Characteristics Describe setting participants in demographic terms, by gender, race, age, or other categories. How do these demographic characteristics influence how the setting works? For instance, if members of the setting are mainly persons of a certain age, or of one gender, how does that affect the atmosphere of the setting?

Social Regularities Can you identify one social regularity or predictable pattern of behavior to analyze (recall the example of teachers asking questions more than students). What role relationships does the regularity involve? (For instance, consider the interlocking roles of teacher–student, boss–employee, organization officer–member, staff member–patient.) Are there differences in power based on this regularity?

Can you suggest changes in social regularities to pursue the setting’s mission or purpose better?

Social Climate If your setting is one for which Moos (1994) and associates have developed a social climate scale (see your instructor about this), complete the scale. If you can, find other setting members to complete it as well, and compute the mean and range of scores for each of the subscales. If a scale is not available, review the discussion in the chapter and decide on social climate concepts that can be used to describe the setting.

What changes would you suggest to improve the setting’s social climate?

Ecological Principles This section concerns Kelly’s ecological principles. You may be able to use information from other sections here.

How are setting participants interdependent? How frequently do they interact? (See your answers on social climate relationship dimensions above.) How could interdependence be enhanced in this setting? Would that be desirable?

What resources, tangible or intangible, exist in the setting? Intangible examples might include knowledge, skills, emotional support, time, energy, commitment, vision for the future, and rituals or traditions of the setting. How are these resources cycled or exchanged in the setting? How could resources be better cultivated or used in the setting?

What demands does this setting place on participants (adaptation)? What skills are needed for participants to adapt to this setting? How can these skills be learned? How could the setting promote learning of these skills?

How has this setting changed over time (succession)? What characteristics of this setting have remained stable over time? What do you foresee for the future of this setting?

Summary Which of the sections above generates the most interesting information about the setting? Are there important things about the setting that are not covered in these questions and concepts? What are the most important things you have learned through this exercise?

Assignment 2- Due week 2 of class- 25 points

Analyze a community problem or issue using the instructions below. The goal is to have their analyses include the issue's psychological and developmental aspects, the likely causes at multiple ecological levels, and how the issue involve multiple viewpoints. Encourage students to recognize organizational, locality and macrosystem forces. Alternatively, you could present community or social problems, especially with short, specific descriptions of each, for students to analyze.

- Choose a specific problem or challenge that your locality or society faces. Examples include poverty, violence in various forms, access to health care, unemployment, homelessness, or an environmental problem. Be specific.
- List the psychological difficulties associated with that problem. Consider whether particular age groups (e.g., infants, children, adolescents, senior citizens) are more vulnerable.
- List likely causes of this problem, at multiple ecological levels of analysis.
- Consider how this problem may actually be an issue on with opposing viewpoints, each with its own understandable reasons. Briefly identify at least two sides of this issue, and how they disagree.
- Write briefly how each problem involves your locality and your society as a whole.

Please review the community or social issue you chose in part 1. Suggest how each of the six approaches to community and social change (consciousness raising, social action, community development, community coalitions, alternative settings, policy research and advocacy) could be applied to that issue. How would each affect the lives of community members? Which approaches are most interesting to them, or ones that they could imagine themselves becoming involved in?

Assignment 3-Due the last week of class- 25 points

Please propose prevention/promotion initiatives using the following instructions as a guide.

- Choose a problem in living that is at least partly psychological in nature. The problem may be defined by symptoms or behaviors (e.g., depression, anxiety, health problem, poor school performance, criminal arrests) or by a stressful situation (e.g., bereavement, divorce, loss of job, poverty). Also choose an age group in which you are interested that experiences this problem; and a community with which you are familiar, where this problem occurs.
- For this problem, age group, and community, list the risk and protective processes that you can identify. Write a sentence to define each process; tell why each protective process is protective. Use the prevention equations (p. 299), to help identify risk processes (numerators in the equations) and protective processes (denominators).
- For this problem, age group, and community, identify examples of primary prevention activities, and of secondary prevention or early treatment activities. List activities that exist and those that you can suggest. Write a sentence or two to describe each existing or suggested intervention. Include what setting that intervention would be based in (e.g., school, neighborhood, workplace). Tell why it represents primary or secondary prevention.