Syllabus
Welcome to Community Psychology!
PSYC 2550 Online Summer 2019

May 20 – July 28, 2019

Instructor: Erika Sanborne
E-mail: Please use UMass Online's Blackboard Mail within the course. Use outside email only if you cannot access Blackboard for some reason: Erika_Sanborne@uml.edu
Online Chats: Wednesdays 8-9PM Eastern Time (ET)

ABOUT THE COURSE

Course Description
Completion of this course is worth 3 credits. PSYC 1010 is a pre-req or co-req.
Surveys the nature and practice of community psychology, including principles of community organization and change as seen in such areas as education, mental health, the workplace, health care, justice system, corrections and social services. Students may participate in field research or projects in the community, and classroom work will include discussion of the field experiences of the participants. Meets Core Curriculum Essential Learning Outcome for Diversity and Cultural Awareness (DCA).

Required Textbook
Kloos, B., Hill, J. Thomas, E. Wandersman, A., & Dalton, J. (2012). *Community psychology: Linking individuals and communities* (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA: Cengage.

Several smaller, supplemental sources are available either within the course or through online library resources. These are specified within lectures. You only need to acquire the textbook on your own.

Course Materials "Release" Day
Each new week of this course begins on a Monday (12:00 AM ET), and ends on a Sunday (11:59PM ET).

The course calendar later in this syllabus provides additional details with regards to the course schedule. Your final exam will be available with the start of Week 10. You can take your final exam at any point during that last week (week 10) of the course.

Course Objectives

At the completion of this course, students should be able to do the following:

• To <u>define</u> and <u>recognize</u> in a community setting the key principles of community psychology, specifically these seven: concern for individual and family wellness, sense of community, respect for human diversity, social justice, empowerment and citizen participation, collaboration and community strengths, and empirical grounding. This objective is reached through the Community Meeting Paper.

• To <u>examine</u> the role of a community leader and <u>categorize</u> observations according to key principles of community psychology. This objective is reached through the Community Meeting Paper.

• To <u>compose</u> illustrations of how to apply community psychology principles to community concerns. This objective is reached through weekly graded posts.

• To <u>assess</u> sense of community in a community; to <u>illustrate</u> the four elements of sense of community in that setting. This objective is reached through the Investigation Paper.

• To <u>conclude</u> from your experience over the semester the extent to which you really can make a difference in the world. This objective is reached through weekly graded posts.

Ged Ed & Core Curriculum Info

For all Continuing Education students, and for day students who matriculated to the University **prior to Fall 2015**, this course is a General Education course that meets the requirements for Social Science (SS) for non-Psychology majors and for Diversity (D) for all students, and it meets these specific General Education standards in the following ways:

- Learning outcome #2: The CRITICAL THINKING standard requires students to "demonstrate the ability to synthesize information, discover connections, differentiate between facts and opinions, assess evidence, draw conclusions, construct arguments on both sides of a debate using the best available evidence, solve problems, develop and test hypotheses."
- Learning outcome #3: The CLEAR COMMUNICATION standard requires students to "demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively: to articulate, support, and defend a position using appropriate modes of communication."
- Learning outcome #4: The DIVERSITY standard requires that students must demonstrate the ability to understand diverse groups of peoples, cultures, and views. Diversity is defined broadly to include culture (i.e., national origin, language, ethnicity, and religion), race, gender, social class, age, sexual orientation, and disability.

For day students whose first semester at UMass Lowell occurs **on or after Fall 2015**, you have been admitted under the new Core Curriculum. Those of you who are not Psychology majors can count this course under Breadth of Knowledge as a Social Science elective. For those of you who are Psychology majors, this course will satisfy the Essential Leaning Outcome of Diversity and Cultural Awareness by enabling you to be better able to:

- Identify and analyze one's own cultural norms and values in relation to those of other cultures and diverse social groups.
- Identify and analyze indicators of discrimination and demonstration of how discriminatory practices and attitudes can create barriers for some and opportunities for others.
- Articulate answers to complex questions about other cultures and diverse groups, reflecting an awareness of diverse cultural and social group perspectives.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Graded Posts

This is the work of every week. Graded posts are due Sunday night before midnight Eastern Time. Students will compose a thoughtful response to the week's assignment, with appropriate reference to lecture content, assigned textbook reading, and the supplemental sources provided or linked to within the week's lecture (i.e. online news stories, journal articles, and videos). The substance of a graded post is based on the student's personal experience in the world, and involves relating and connecting one's observations to the concepts being studied in the course, naming and citing those specific concepts by textbook page number. **Unless otherwise specified, a graded post must reference specific terms and concepts from the assigned textbook reading.** Graded posts for the course comprise **30% of the final course grade**. Find additional details in the Start Here module. Look for the section called **Graded Posts – The Work of Every Week.**

Community Meeting Paper

This is the first of two course papers. It is a major course assignment, due at the end of Week 5 (June 23, 2019). For this assignment, students need to attend a public community meeting. Students can find ideas on choosing a meeting, and a clarifying list of what's not allowed in the assignment guidelines. The meeting is the student's choice, but I do need to approve that choice. My decision to approve is based solely on my confidence that such a meeting will provide a rich enough experience from which the student can complete this assignment. Find something you like, as the parameters are wide. You also need to talk with someone in a position of leadership within that group. Choose a meeting for which you feel comfortable asking someone in leadership for a conversation.

The purpose of this paper is not an assessment of the meeting, but for you to discover how a community accomplishes its goals, using the lens of community psychology. The Community Meeting Paper is worth **25% of the final course grade**. Find additional details in the assignment guidelines.

Investigation Paper

This is the second course paper. It is a major course assignment, due at the end of Week 8 (July 14, 2019). For this assignment, choose a community that interests you! This can be a locality – your neighborhood, street, condo community, your town, etc. This can also be a relational community – your fraternity, your faith community, the local business community, the local American Indian community, the local Deaf community, a social club you spend a lot of time with, the local arts community, the local LGBTQ+ community, your work community, etc. After introducing the reader to your community, most of your paper will be about the elements of sense of community as you see them, following the McMillan-Chavis model for sense of community. The Investigation Paper is worth **25% of the final course grade**. Find additional details in the assignment guidelines.

Final Exam

As required by the university, this course has a final exam. Questions are multiple-choice, and assess the student's ability to connect core concepts from community psychology with provided examples and illustrations. The final exam is worth **20% of the final course grade**. You may complete your final exam at your convenience during the last week of the semester. It is due at end of course, July 28, 2019.

Course grades are computed as follows without further rounding:

93.0 – 100.0 = A (4.0)	80.0 – 82.9 = B- (2.7)	67.0 – 69.9 = D+ (1.3)
90.0 – 92.9 = A- (3.7)	77.0 – 79.9 = C+ (2.3)	63.0 – 66.9 = D (1.0)
87.0 – 89.9 = B+ (3.3)	73.0 – 76.9 = C (2.0)	0 – 63.0* = F (0.0)
83.0 – 86.9 = B (3.0)	70.0 – 72.9 = C- (1.7)	*Scores up to and including 62.94 are too low to earn a passing grade.

TO SUCCEED IN THIS COURSE

What is expected <u>of you</u>?

You will see that this course has a lot of freedom for you to choose topics consistent with your own experience, professional interests, and learning goals. Community psychology affords you a framework, a way of looking at things, and you can demonstrate your learning of relevant concepts by linking what you observe with what we learn in the course. For example, please remember that weekly graded posts should reference specific concepts in the textbook, concepts which you put in **bold type** and cite by page number.

In general, to succeed in this course, you should expect to devote around six hours per week beyond the "in class" time of reading and viewing lecture content, on average, in order to keep up with coursework. It is expected that you will complete your own original work with integrity and on time, and that your communication with one another and the instructor will be mutually respectful. It is expected that you will ask clarifying questions if you are unsure of any aspect of an assignment.

You can email me at any time, but I ask that you post your questions to the discussion boards unless your question is private or personal in nature. If you email me a general course question I may ask you to post it on the Questions discussion board for my reply, so that others can receive my response to the question. I will communicate any personal inquiries or feedback to you via email, and will frequently send "all-class bulletins" too. Check your email inside Blackboard often! By "email" I mean the "Mail" link in the left side margin inside the course in Blackboard.

Students' interactions should be consistent with the university's academic policies and regulations as published here: https://www.uml.edu/Catalog/Undergraduate/Policies/Academic-Policies/Academic-Policies.aspx. If a student feels they have been unfairly treated, a student's rights are described here: https://www.uml.edu/Catalog/Undergraduate/Policies/Academic-Policies/Student-Complaints.aspx.

If you have any learning needs that I can accommodate, you need to first contact the Office of Disability Services. Together you and they will let me know how I can be most helpful to your learning. In accordance with University policy and the ADA, I will happily accommodate students with documented disabilities per the Office of Disability Services. If you have a disability and are not currently receiving accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services to arrange future accommodations.

What can you expect <u>of the instructor</u>?

I am available to help you understand course materials and expectations, and I believe that we are "in this together" for our shared time in this course.

I respect the time you put into your coursework by giving you my time in return. For papers in this course, I won't just give you a grade. I will be in touch with you privately, by email, to give details on strengths and weaknesses in your work. That is also an invitation for further conversation if anything remains unclear. I don't believe that you can ask me too many questions – I am here for you. Ask away.

The course is conveniently available to you 24 hours a day. Unfortunately, I am not. I'm fairly quick with responding to Blackboard messages within 24 hours, and often much quicker than that, but you should not expect last minute help. For example, a frantic email earlier in the day when a major course assignment is due that night is not going to be fruitful. A lack of planning on your part does not make for an emergency on my part. I will help you a great deal. You just need to seek help when you need it, and not at the last minute.

There is also weekly chat. Chat participation is encouraged but not required. I am present for all chat sessions. You bring an agenda – i.e., your questions, reactions, and comments as related to our coursework. Think of it like coming to office hours, potentially with other students. If you don't come with an agenda there will be the online equivalent of awkward silence. When several students show up with questions and ideas, it's productive! Do as you will, but it's another resource available to you.

POLICIES

Academic Integrity

"The integrity of the academic enterprise of any institution of higher education requires honesty in all aspects of its endeavor. Maintaining academic integrity is therefore the responsibility of all faculty, staff, and students at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. Academic dishonesty is prohibited in all programs of the University. Sanctions may be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty…" You need to be familiar with the University's policies on academic integrity, and you need to understand that I endeavor to fervently monitor for academic dishonesty. You can find the university's Academic Integrity Policy here: https://www.uml.edu/Catalog/Undergraduate/Policies/Academic-Policies/Academic-Integrity.aspx.

Netiquette

Netiquette refers to proper behavior while interacting online. The golden rule of netiquette is essentially to treat people as you would want to be treated. Please be polite and considerate. Think about whether your comment could cause hurt feelings. Be careful about how your words can come across because misunderstandings can be common online. Feel free to use emoticons to show your tone! :) If you are replying to someone's post, please address them by name. If you prefer a name other than what Blackboard has for you, please be sure to "sign" your posts, so that when people reply to you they can use your preferred address. **I realize not all online courses have you "sign" your posts, but I encourage this because it's more conversational. It's not required.**

Late Work and Missed Assignments

All assignments are due before midnight Eastern Time, or end-of-day. Work is time-stamped. The moment the clock tower tolls at 12:00 AM Eastern Time, it is officially the next day and a submitted assignment is LATE and graded accordingly. You need to submit no later than 11:59:59 PM, if you are a last second kind of person. There is no "little bit late" that is overlooked. Late work is reduced in grade as noted below. After one week, any work you have not submitted is graded as missed. FYI, *explanations* of why one's work is late does not *excuse* one's work from being graded as late, and do not lead to its *acceptance* as if it were on time. The deadlines and guidelines are available to you from the first minute of the semester. Avoid waiting until the last minute to do your work so that you can avoid submitting your work late.

- ## Late Weekly Graded Posts

When posting on the graded discussion boards, you will note the time stamp and anything posted after 11:59:59 PM is late. For example, a graded post time-stamped at 12:00 AM next day is late. You may also find that the discussion board may be locked. Even if it is not locked, late is late. To submit late graded posts after a discussion board is locked, please use a specific subject line in your email to me containing your late work to ensure due credit is given, like this:

Subj: Week 2 Graded Post late for half credit

Weekly Graded Posts can be submitted up to one week late for half credit. These posts are smaller, weekly assignments and if not submitted within the one-week late period they are missed and graded as a "0" for that week. There is no "little bit late" consideration for something you have a full week to submit. Work not submitted on time is late.

- ## Late Papers

Submitting either of the two major papers late results in a reduction of <u>one full letter grade per 2 days late</u>. A paper submitted one second late up to two full days late, is reduced in grade by one full letter grade. This leaves up to one week late to submit your paper for this reduced grade. These are major course assignments and submitting late work of any quality will substantially impact your grade. Please do not be late with your work. If either of these papers is not submitted within the late period of one week, a grade of "50%" will be entered for that missed major paper.

As a tip, if you're going to submit your paper at 12:01 AM, you're already submitting late work. Please consider holding onto it, and making it your best work on quality, while still submitting it within the first 48 hours. The penalty is the same (one full letter grade for up to two days late) and you do not gain advantage by submitting just a few moments late. In my experience, work that is submitted a few moments late is often not complete and correct. Take the rest of those 48 hours to at least make it your best work on quality, so that when the letter grade penalty is applied you might, for example, be submitting "A" quality work that earns a grade of B, which is not a bad grade for late work. Do your best.

- ## Final Exam

Not submitting your final exam by end of semester, which is midnight Eastern Time on July 28, 2019, is equivalent to having not been present to take a final exam. The resulting grade entered for your missed final exam will be "50%".

SUMMER 2019 ACCELERATED COURSE CALENDAR
COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

Week #	Dates	Textbook reading	Topics	Major Assignments Due
1	5/20 – 5/26	Ch.1	Introducing Community Psychology	
2	5/27 – 6/2	Ch. 2	The Development and Practice of Community Psychology	
3	6/3 – 6/9	Ch. 3-4	Community Research	
4	6/10 – 6/16	Ch. 5	Ecology – Layers of Context	
5	6/17 – 6/23	Ch. 6	Understanding Community	Community Meeting Paper *(due 6/23)*
6	6/24 – 6/30	Ch. 7	Understanding Human Diversity in Context	
7	7/1 – 7/7	Ch. 11	Empowerment and Citizen Participation	*Calendar Note: 6/28/19 is the last day to Withdraw with "W"*
8	7/8 – 7/14	Ch. 8	Understanding Stress and Coping	Investigation Paper *(due 7/14)*
9	7/15 – 7/21	Ch.9-10	Prevention and Promotion	
10	7/22 – 7/28	Ch. 13	Program Evaluation and Development	Final Exam *(due 7/28)*

GETTING STARTED ON DAY 1

I know semester startup time can be hectic. I am writing this part to help you ease in right on track. Here are my start-up tips.

Get the textbook immediately. You will need it every week, including Week 1. You cannot earn an "A" on graded posts without citing the book. Shop around. It's an older book and you can rent it for about $20. Once you have it, read chapter 1 a few times. It's not often the case in an undergraduate course that the first chapter is as useful as this one is. Nearly every single thing we get into throughout the semester is introduced in chapter 1. It's a secret resource, and I suggest giving it some time for careful reading.

Right away, read the assignment guidelines for the Community Meeting Paper. You need to find a meeting that you want to attend, so you can propose it and hopefully get it approved. I urge you to do this immediately because many organizations meet monthly. This paper is due at the end of week 5, and you don't really need to worry about what goes into that paper right away, but you do need to start looking around. If you find something early, you can probably attend whatever you'd like, because the paper will be due in five weeks. **The longer you wait, the fewer options you are leaving for yourself.**

Look at photos the community psychology facebook page for examples of some community meetings that previous students have attended (https://www.facebook.com/pg/CommunityPsychology/photos/). Like the page for the semester to get some reminders and news too.

Introduce yourself on the Introductions board once in Blackboard, and get to know one another a bit. I truly look forward to our time together, and I thank you for your careful reading of this syllabus.

What follows are Assignment Guidelines for both major course papers. These guidelines were previously separate but are now contained in this one giant syllabus file. Please do not be overwhelmed by the giant syllabus file – this is assembled to give you a one-stop shop for the information you will need, not to distress you. ☺

Community Meeting & Interview Paper
Assignment Guidelines (next 4 pages in syllabus)

The paper has three sections. The first two sections for this paper involve scheduling your attendance at the start of the semester, although you don't have to complete them at the start of the semester. In these detailed guidelines, I will outline what the paper entails as well as the tasks you need to complete in order to write it. I'm also giving tips for success and highest grades. Your paper will be graded according to this rubric: http://communitypsychology.info/CommunityMeetingPaper_Rubric.pdf

Task #1 Attend a community meeting. Attendance means that you will physically go to a meeting in person.

    a. I have to approve the community meeting you have chosen. This is solely for me to make sure you've chosen one that will meet the course requirements. You should propose the meeting you'd like to attend on the Community Meeting discussion board for approval, at the start of the semester.

        i. Here is a sample post of the details you need to include in your proposal on the discussion board. You can copy-paste and fill in your details.

            Name of meeting: Science Club Monthly Meeting
            General agenda for this specific meeting: review the budget, plan upcoming events, discuss student concerns; past meeting agendas are at this website: https://www.facebook.com/CommunityPsychology/
            Name of organization: Sanborne Jr. High School
            The organization's website: https://www.facebook.com/CommunityPsychology/
            When: May 31, 2019 @ 2:30 PM
            Where: Sanborne Jr. High School 2nd floor auditorium 123 Main St. Sanborne, MA
            Person (by role) I plan to interview: Science Club President
            (Optional) Why I want to attend: I am studying to be a science teacher. Also, my sister is still in school there. She also happens to be the president of the science club, so I can interview her which makes things easier.

        ii. Here are some common meeting choices that **will work**: city council; school committee; homeowners association; a religious group's leadership meeting (church/temple/other *planning* or *business* meeting); political action group planning or board meeting; neighborhood association; board meeting for a nonprofit organization; PTO/PTA meeting; any UML student association e-board or leadership meeting; union meeting; almost any city or town municipal meeting you would find on yours or any city/town website's calendar.

      iii.   Basically, think of a group in a community, who meets for a specific purpose and has some authority relative to the community of interest. Their meetings have an agenda, and the people "sitting around the table" hear discussions and then vote on actions to come. **Business and decision-making must take place at the specific meeting you're attending for this assignment.** This could be a United States Congressional Session or it could be the seventh grade science club meeting. Size doesn't matter but structure does – <mark>your chosen meeting must have people in leadership who listen to things and then vote on what will change or be done. It has to be a decision-making meeting of some kind.</mark>

      iv.   Here are some common ones that **will *not* work** and will not be approved: staff meeting; training; information session; educational event; community event; any "anonymous" or other therapeutic support group; public forum; Q&A session; party or social event; any meeting where decision making does not happen

      v.   Here are a few considerations and pieces of advice on choosing a meeting: Pick a meeting you have some interest in. And pick a meeting for which you feel comfortable asking the person in leadership to schedule an interview! For example, if you don't feel comfortable asking the mayor for some time, then don't pick a meeting where the mayor is the leadership of it. Pick what you want. If it can cover the course requirements, I'll approve it.

   b. Take notes at the meeting. Most of your paper will come from the notes you write during the meeting. I've been told that taking a lot of notes is a good idea, and that coming in with the seven core principles of community psychology written down, maybe even with space between them and a little definition for each, helps sort notes as you're writing at the meeting.

Section #1 of the paper: About the Meeting (1 - 2 pages)

You will write about the meeting in your paper in no more than two double-spaced pages, which is not a lot. Yes, you can go a little over if you need to. Mostly I need to get a sense, from reading, of what transpired at the meeting from the time you got there until the end. You might want to write a lot of notes while you are there, so you can later select from a lot of detail what clear and concise details you want to ultimately write up in the paper.

Start this section with what you saw when you got there, and end this section with how you felt at the end. In between those points, describe the highlights of the meeting. If you would like to see a **complete, sample paper** you can grab a copy in PDF and WORD formats.

Task #2 Interview someone in a position of leadership at that meeting.

"Interview" means that you will physically go talk to a person face to face.

   a. Here is some advice on choosing and setting up that interview:

      i.   You need to schedule this in advance, because without the in-person interview you didn't complete the assignment. Ask me questions if you're not sure whether you're interviewing the right person based on your chosen meeting. If you guess wrong, your interview might not count. If in doubt, ask me. And schedule this brief but essential conversation; do not just attend a meeting and try to grab someone on the spot after it.

     ii. Don't use the word "interview" when asking someone to give you time; instead, refer to asking a few questions. I have heard that people are successful politely saying, *"Could I possibly ask you a few questions after the meeting? I am attending for a college course assignment. I can be done in 3-5 minutes."*

     iii. I have an official-looking letter which you can share when making your request. I wrote this because some people like to include it. However, it can also make this seem like a bigger deal than it is, so use it only if you decide that it's helpful. Link is here: https://faculty.uml.edu/esanborne/interview.pdf

b. Optional: Take a photo with you and your interviewee for the Community Psychology facebook page and earn extra credit equivalent to half a letter grade on the paper, which is substantial. Get permission, and do not take a selfie for Pete's sake. When you share it, include in the caption the who/what/when/where of your photo of you and your interviewee. If you don't have a facebook, have someone else post for you. I cannot do this for you, for copyright reasons; it has to come from you or someone you designate.

c. Required: You will need to provide official contact information for your interviewee when you submit your paper, as I may contact them with questions and/or to ensure academic integrity. Business phone # and email address, name and title. If you do happen to interview a minor, such as the middle school science club president, submit official contact information for the adult who supervised that meeting, such as the teacher.

d. Interview questions – ask whatever you want. Ask with the community psychology reflection in mind, but ask what you want. I do not grade your interview questions, only "check mark" that you talked with someone in a position of leadership. See this on the grading rubric too. It's what you do with your interview questions that I grade. You can ask personal questions if you'd like, such as: What first made you want to get into this work? Do you have any partners in your work? What sustains you during difficult times? What are you personally most proud of accomplishing here? Ask whatever you want. Also, you might want to ask specific questions based on what you learned about or heard in the meeting. Here is a video of me interviewing two community leaders with this assignment in mind. Notice I did two complete interviews in ten minutes: https://youtu.be/3W5e2A9BH1Y

e. Go in with four good written questions so you are prepared, but also ask questions that you have about what you just saw happen at the meeting. Substitute those in the moment.

f. Note-taking – take notes immediately after the interview. I do not recommend audio recording because it makes people nervous and is probably not legal without their expressed permission. And you're not transcribing for your paper anyway. Notes after you speak will be enough.

Section #2 of the paper: About the Interview (1 – 2 pages)

In your paper, you'll list "Q&A" with your fair recollection of the answers. This can be in bullet list form. Don't try to make paragraphs out of it. And you don't need to include everything, just what is useful. Ask at least four relevant questions. You can write in your paper like this:

Me: What is your favorite part of this course?
Manager: I think I like the community meeting assignment. It reminds me of how some things in school are actually useful to me in my work as Science Club Manager.
Etc.

Section #3 of the paper: Community Psychology Reflection (3 – 5 pages)

The important section of the paper is called the *Community Psychology Reflection*. This is your discussion of both the presence and the absence of the seven core principles in the field of community psychology. These seven core principles are covered in the textbook, and introduced briefly and nicely in chapter 1 of the same. This section is where you earn your grade. <mark>It must be no less than three full pages, double-spaced. Shorter than three full pages is not enough words to cover this part of the assignment.</mark> Do not give any space to defining the terms. I am your target audience, and I already know what these words mean. Section 3 of the paper is a reflection on the seven core principles/values of community psychology, indicating both their presence and their absence, based on what you heard and observed. If you would like to see a **complete, sample paper** you can grab a copy in PDF and WORD formats. Additionally, here is a sample paragraph from Section 3 of someone's paper. In this piece, he is addressing the core principle of *empirical grounding*.

> Empirical Grounding
>
> Throughout the City Council meeting, most of the motions discussed called for further research. As these approved motions develop further toward the pursuit of their respective goals, the research should give them the support of empirical grounding. Many of the topics that were quickly mentioned throughout the meeting were approved in order to define, understand, and address their community issue. One interesting example was when "Motion A" was the topic of discussion. Councilor M. inquired about the rerouting of the Baystate Marathon to reduce the community issue of the disruptions of traffic. She mentioned that this community problem came up when she was researching to see if an Oktoberfest-type event would be feasible enough to coincide with this race. The quantitative evidence that this marathon is the cause of traffic that day came up in discussion, where it was enough to be its own defined problem that needed to be addressed. Based on these specific empirical findings, Councilor M. mentions that this is another prime example of how other good things can come from a motion. Most "good ideas" that were shared in the council meeting had references to relevant research that suggested both an empirical basis and measurable outcomes of the proposed changes.

Tips for getting ready to attend the meeting…

Read the meeting's agenda ahead of time if you can, and become at least basically familiar with what this organization does. A strategy I've been told works well: Write out the seven core community psychology principles, with an abbreviated definition for each one. Take this with you to the meeting. You can then take notes of your observations by categorizing them! If you are interviewing the person on the same trip, be prepared by having your questions written out and in hand. Don't restrict yourself from asking new questions that came up that day, of course, and do plan to keep to any time constraints you may have agreed to. Bring your phone/camera if you want to participate in the extra credit by sharing a photo of you with your interviewee on the facebook page. Please, please do not take a selfie with a community leader. Ask someone to take the photo, if you want the extra credit.

Read the rubric. Plan to earn the most points. I will share two additional sample papers with you in Week 3 lecture – look for those. Ask me any questions you have at any points while working on this paper. It's not a complicated paper. The hardest part is you choosing a meeting and scheduling your own attendance.

Community Investigation Paper
Assignment Guidelines (next 5 pages in syllabus)

The purpose of this assignment is: **To assess sense of community in a setting, and to illustrate the four elements of sense of community in that setting.**

And that is what I will eventually be grading, that you sufficiently convinced me that you understand what makes up sense of community. You'll start your paper with a little introduction to your chosen community, and you'll conclude your paper with a few words about the challenges they face and what their future looks like. Those are the bookends. The whole middle part of your paper is on sense of community. That's the heart of the assignment, and where most of your grade is earned. We are using the McMillan-Chavis model of sense of community. The McMillan-Chavis model of sense of community is covered in Week 5 lecture and Chapter 6 in your textbook. Your paper will be graded according to this rubric.

Here is the short version how to get an A on this paper:

1. Learn what sense of community is first – see McMillan-Chavis model in the Week 5 lecture, full-text journal article, and textbook chapters 1 and 6
2. Pick a community – your own favorite, or someone else's favorite.
3. Assess its sense of community – go straight through the four elements and the details of each.
4. Format properly - use the complete sample paper as a model.
5. Write enough substance – no quotes, no fluff.
6. Read the rubric - to make sure you cover everything.
7. Submit your paper on time.

These are all the related resources for this assignment, in one place:

- My Video Introducing This Assignment: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOB74rh5rk8
- Grading Rubric: http://communitypsychology.info/CommunityInvestigationPaper_Rubric.pdf
- My McMillan-Chavis Outline: http://communitypsychology.info/McMillan-ChavisModel.pdf
- Full-text of classical McMillan & Chavis (1986) journal article: http://www.drdavidmcmillan.com/article-1/
- Complete Sample Paper in Word and PDF.
- Video journal of my data gathering for the sample paper: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLhxz_88LOA

How to choose a community

Think of a community who has **shared experiences**, **a history together**, something that symbolized **membership**, a sense of **meeting one another's needs**, **boundaries** that define who is a member and who is not, **people who have influence** over the group, etc.

You do not need any permission or approval, although if you're not sure about your choice, or if you want my help deciding from among some options, just let me know.

The only people that cannot be considered "a community" for our purposes are: your family, and your friends. Those people comprise your social network, which is different. See also page 178 in your textbook under the heading of "Levels of Communities" for more ideas. **You cannot write about a community from your past – you have to get to know their sense of community now in the present.**

"These are my people!" What community is that for you? Write about them.

To answer a common question, what if you don't feel you can write about a community you belong to? Well then you should write about someone else's community. You'll need to use that person to help assess sense of community in his/her community. Big hint: If you're going to write about someone else's community then think of a friend or family member who's really proud to be a part of some specific community. Then write about them.

Even though you might have to be asking people to tell you about things, do not include a Q&A in your final paper. This is not an interview paper. You might include a few brief quotes, but mostly not.

I wrote a Complete Sample Paper

I chose to complete this assignment for myself a few years back. Think of it as **solidarity**. I intentionally chose a community I didn't know about whatsoever, and I wrote my paper based on asking people to tell me about their community, and that's how I learned about their sense of community. The complete sample paper is what I wrote following that excursion. And I made a video journal of my day doing this too, so I could share my efforts with you. It's not a polished video by any means – I just had someone record so that I could show you what I did to know what to write in my paper. Also, I share the paper with you that I wrote based on that day.

I could have written my paper start to finish without leaving my house, if I already knew a lot about this community. I could write this paper about many communities I already know pretty well. And you can potentially do that – write your paper without leaving your house. If you can pull it off, you would then be sort of linking up what you know about them with the elements of sense of community. But going to an event made it really easy to write the paper. If you watch my video journal and read my sample paper, you'll see how straightforward this paper is. You can also do this from home by watching some videos about your chosen community, and then asking a few people some questions by email or phone.

Gather the data however you want, about whatever community you choose. Your goal is to assess sense of community.

Your paper must have three sections:

- **Introduction** (1 page) – Describe the community as if you were a greeter giving a tour to new guests who came by to learn about your community. Say where it is, how long it's been around, how big or small it is, what you like or dislike about them, things like this. Here you might include a photograph too. Do not copy and paste from their website or Wikipedia. Just describe this community in your own words.
- **Sense of Community** (4+ pages) – This is <u>the important part</u> of the paper, working through the McMillan-Chavis model of Sense of Community. This should be a minimum of four pages, critically assessing the four elements of sense of community. Do not give any space to defining the terms, just apply them. I am your target audience, and I already know what these words mean. You cannot complete this most important part of the paper is less space than four full, double-spaced pages. And wordiness that does not add substance is something that I ignore when grading, so don't bother adding in any fluff. If you're short in this section, add more content with substance or your paper will be incomplete and your grade will have to reflect that.
- **Most pressing issues** (1 page) – What are the one or two greatest challenges faced by this community today? How are they going about meeting those challenges? What does the future look like for this community? This should read like a conclusion not a redundancy.

Remember: View the [Grading Rubric](#) for details on exactly where points are earned and lost.

Frequently Asked Questions – Read These!

Q1. Can I write about any community?

A. Pretty much yes, and you don't need any approval. The only groups <u>not</u> considered communities for our purposes are your family, and your friends in general. Those are social networks, and that's different. (see p.178 in the textbook)

Q2. Can I write about a community from my past?

A. No. It must be a present community that you assess with present day attention.

Q3. What do I do if I am not part of any community?

A. If you think this is the case, write about someone else's community. You must complete assignments about communities. You are literally completing a course about communities. The University's course catalog description for Community Psychology says so. It is what it is. It's easier to write about your own community, which is why I allow and encourage that, but you can certainly write about someone else's. The example I have modeled for you in my sample paper is using a community I didn't previously know anything about.

Q4. Do I have to like the community?

A. No. In fact, plenty of communities have a very strong sense of community and yet are quite destructive. For example, a gang has a high sense of community. You're not necessarily writing to say how wonderful your chosen community is, although most students do find it easiest to write about their own favorite community, which ends up being a picture of what makes them great.

Q5. Are you sharing this paper with anyone?

A. No. I'm often asked this, because people sometimes need to share details that might not be public. I won't save or share your paper with anyone. After the course has ended, I will not even have a copy of it.

Q6. Is there an example for formatting the paper?

A. Yes! Follow APA Style guides or please just copy my sample paper formatting. Try your best to use APA format, but your grade is only negatively impacted if you don't follow the basic formatting guidelines repeated throughout the course: 12pt Times New Roman black font, straight double-spacing with no extra spaces between paragraphs, 1" margins all four sides, and simple page numbers top right corner. All word processing programs allow you to change these settings, so you should do that.

Q7. What about references?

A. You won't likely have any references. You do not need to reference my McMillan-Chavis outline, lecture notes, the journal article, or the textbook. If do you reference a source for some reason, obviously cite it. Academic dishonesty is just as much a bad idea on this paper as any other. If you are referencing several things, you are probably not doing this right. Most of this paper is your observations and thoughts which illustrate the four elements of sense of community. Suppose I described a music band as loud. I don't need to reference studies about decibels sound. I could say that the band was loud in my experience, because I got a headache. See? No reference. Report your observations.

Q8. What about defining terms?

A. Don't do it. I am your target audience and I already know what these words mean. You are writing a paper about sense of community in a certain group, to someone who knows what sense of community is, to demonstrate that you now know it too. Including definitions or explanations of terms would lower your grade.

Q9. So should the paper have subheadings?

A. Yes. APA Style subheadings should be used. Be sure to make one subheading for each of the four elements of sense of community: Membership, Influence, Integration and Fulfillment of Needs, and Shared Emotional Connection. Give approximately the same amount of attention to each of the four elements. See the sample paper if you want to just copy the correct formatting to begin with.

Q10. Do we need to attend an event for this paper?

A. I suggest an event because you could write about sense of community entirely referencing one community event. I wrote the sample paper nearly twice as long as you have to, from one event in a community. Attending helps you write the paper. Do it if you can, but it is not required.

Q11. What about a picture?

A. It is also not required, but it could enhance your paper. It should be a picture of the community, or a person, or something in the community. Do not include things like logos, or just some random group photo. For example, a picture of someone smoking while leaning against a no smoking sign says something, and it might illustrate a point you're making about sense of community. Look for something like that.

Q12. You said photo. Can I get extra credit for sharing it like last time?

A. No. The photos enhance your paper, so put them in there if you have something that illustrates a key point, but it's neither extra nor required.

Q13. What if my paper is not long enough?

A. The minimum length requirements for your work are there for good reason. If you have to prioritize your time last minute, finish the Sense of Community section. **Those four+ middle pages are where most of the grade comes from. And remember not to not be wordy or define terms.**

As always, be in touch with me if you have any questions, comments, feedback or concerns. The only kind of help I cannot offer is the last-minute kind of help. If you can't make it to a scheduled chat time, message me and we'll set up another time for us to chat.