# HOD2670/Psych 2470: Introduction to Community Psychology

 Tu/Th, 9:35 a.m. - 10:50 p.m., Payne 007

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**Course Description:** This course provides an overview of theory, research and action in community psychology (CP). CP is the study and application of psychological solutions to community-based social, mental health, and environmental problems. It also explores the relationships between stressful environments, supportive social systems, and individual and family well-being. It emphasizes values, applied research, and action all focused on promoting the welfare of the whole community, especially under-served populations. It focuses on people’s and communities’ strengths, not just their deficits, and on prevention, self-help, empowerment, cultural diversity, and changing local conditions through organizational, community, and societal-level action.

* How do friends and family help you cope with life's major traumas and daily hassles?
* How did the kids, teachers and parents of Project Head Start change the nation's mind about what makes people poor and underachieving?
* Why have so many mentally ill and other people been "deinstitutionalized," what does that mean, and why have so many become homeless?
* How can people organize, work collectively to improve their neighborhoods, workplaces, services, and other community settings, and develop a greater sense of community?

CP answers these and many other questions.

Course Objectives: To introduce students to the basic values, historical influences, theories, and levels and methods of intervention in CP. To allow students to relate these (1) to other approaches in psychology and other social sciences and helping professions, (2) to an actual organization or other community setting, and (3) to their own lives.

**Required text**: Kloos, B., Hill, J., Thomas, E., Wandersman, A., Elias, M., & Dalton, J. (2012). *Community Psychology: Linking Individuals and Communities* (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Cengage Learning. T**he text is available from the VU bookstore. Many weeks, there will also be additional required and recommended readings linked to E-reserves or the Outline on OAK.**

Class lectures, outlines and, especially, text chapters are the intellectual property of the instructor and may not be sold, published, or posted on the internet in any form without the instructor's permission. Students may share class notes with others enrolled in the class as a courtesy, but not for pay.

**IMPORTANT—Class Format:** This class will be a collaborative endeavor and your active participation is required. Class meetings will be run as a large seminar in which the required readings and student projects will be discussed in groups and as a class, along with lectures and occasional guest speakers. Please do all the reading on time & come to class on time. **Class attendance is important and may be taken at any time**; it will be used to round final grades up or down. Questions and comments during ALL class activities, including lectures are strongly encouraged, but give everyone a chance to participate. **LAPTOPS MAY ONLY BE USED IN CLASS TO TAKE NOTES OR REFER TO READINGS; NEVER USE IN CLASS FOR ANY PURPOSE OUTSIDE THIS COURSE.**

**No Prerequisites:** A background in psychology is NOT required.

**Graded Course Requirements**: Aside from the weekly “take-home” quizzes on OAK Discussions (#3 below), the 2 main writing assignments should be connected—choose a seminar paper topic you are interested in by week 2, then a setting which relates to that topic to analyze by week 3. Then get approval (of both instructor &, if necessary, a site supervisor) for your site visit or service activity by week 5 & visit the site at least once BEFORE completing assignment 1; if the visit/service cannot be arranged, identify an alternate site; if all relevant sites are unavailable, choose another topic where you can find an appropriate visit or service experience. The 1st paper must be uploaded to SafeAssign on OAK. The 2nd paper should be emailed to the instructor with your last name at the start of the filename. You will briefly present and discus both papers in class before they are due. See detailed instructions and grading rubrics for each assignment on OAK.

**1. Seminar Paper (23% of course grade; 3-page single-spaced (SS), due in week 7)**: Read the Contents, Preface, Intro, & Chapter 1 of the text to identify a topic that interests you. You must email your topic to the instructor by the 2nd week of class. Do a thorough search, especially of the recent research literature on the topic (e.g, using PsycInfo, Proquest-Refereed, Google Scholar, etc.). Write a paper, summarizing and critically reviewing and analyzing the literature on that topic, particularly its community and psychological/behavioral aspects.

**2. Community or Organizational Setting Analysis/ Site Visit/Intervention Experience (45%; map + 3-page-SS setting analysis + 2-page-SS reflection (or project report) + field notes + log of hours, due at end of semester):** By week 5, you will choose (or be assigned) 1 or more off-campus settings related to your Seminar Paper topic to visit and objectively document and assess (explained further in class). Minimum off-campus time requirement = 3 hours. Optional: 1-30 hours of additional time on the project will be counted as extra credit and can increase your assignment grade by a maximum of one full letter grade.) Let the instructor know if you are having any difficulty at, or finding, your community site.

For the 1st (setting analysis) section of your report, use 2 OR MORE community psychology principles or concepts (highlight each in **BOLD**) to analyze both strengths and weaknesses of the setting. You may consider any aspect of the socio-cultural, political, economic, or physical environment of the community or setting, but be sure to include both (1) an analysis and critique of the psychological (i.e., behavioral, cognitive, or emotional) aspects of the functioning (strengths and weaknesses) of the setting and (2) a cognitive map of the setting (can be based on your memory of the physical layout or environs and meaningful places; you can use an existing map or floorplan, but be sure to modify it in some way that relates to your setting analysis). Conclude with 1 or 2 detailed paragraphs proposing a possible intervention program or policy, organized at the community, organizational, or societal systems (i.e., not individual or family) level, to address the setting’s or participants’ problems or develop their strengths.

For the rest of your report, (1) Keep a log of your off-campus hours on this project (sample on OAK), including date of each visit, start and ending time, location, activity, supervisor’s name and phone number or email address; (2) immediately after each visit, write down field notes including any reflections on the experience; (3) after completing your visit(s), write a 2-SS-page section, based on your field notes and experience, discussing how your in-person observations relate to both your seminar paper and your analysis of the setting based on CP principles in the 1st section of your report—did your direct observations illustrate or contradict any theoretical or research claims from class or the text? This last section will be assigned as a personal reflection or a project report depending on whether the class is doing a group project this semester. In sum, the first section concentrates on applying theory to a community or organizational setting, the other on applying your experience to existing theory or research.

**3. Weekly Take-Home Quizzes on OAK Discussion (checked 4 times/semester: 4 X 8 = 32%).** Instead of ANY in-class exams or quizzes, students are required to participate on the OAK Discussion Board at least once each week, including responding to **questions that will be posed regularly IN CLASS, posting your own question about each chapter, sharing websites or news relevant to the course, or contributing to Community Psychology Wikipedia pages**. Be sure to use your posts to demonstrate as deeply and comprehensively as possible your understanding of the readings for that week. In addition to writing about the **topics discussed in class (required)**, you may start your own threads and will also get credit for informed and insightful postings on anything related to the readings, community intervention experience or other assignments, or current events as related to a course topic. For example, you might take something from the text or any other part of this course and explore how it could be applied and helpful in your life currently or in the future or helpful to some person, group, or community you know. Alternatively, you may suggest a Wikipedia page or portion of a page, relevant to the current week’s topic, and post the current entry as the first entry in a new discussion thread. Then, using the week’s readings, course discussions, and criteria stated above, post a ‘reply’ to the first current Wikipedia entry with your new suggested entry. Students are encouraged to revise and edit peer-generated Wikipedia suggestions. All entries receive at least partial OAK Discussion credit and more substantial edits to proposed entries may qualify in place of a weekly “take-home quiz entry”. We suggest ample feedback from classmates and this course’s Professor/TA before you upload a Wikipedia entry. Please title your entry: [WIKIPEDIA: (title of your entry)] in the discussion on OAK. To sign up for a Wikipedia editing account please visit Wikipedia or contact your TA. You should post **at LEAST** one substantial entry or multiple shorter responses **every week**. **OAK Discussion will be graded at multiple points during the semester for understanding and application of content of text and class presentations and discussion, consistent participation (e.g., at least 1 substantial or more shorter posts each week), and most of the weekly take-home quiz questions addressed (OK to skip 2 or 3 questions as long as you still post re a Wikipedia page or something else relevant to the course that week)**.

**Grading Policy:** The following are my definitions of grades: A = Extraordinary work. Only a small percentage of students consistently turn in the caliber of work that merits an A. B = Very good work. B is commendable. It is likely that about a third to half of the students in this course will receive a B consistently. C = Average work. C work is acceptable, complete, but displays little effort or insight above and beyond what is necessary. A third of the students in this class may receive a C. D = passing, but sub-par work. D work is incomplete, poor quality, or fails to achieve the basic objectives of the assignment or class. F = failure. F work is severely incomplete and/or unacceptable quality. For more information on grading, please read these webpages: <http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/html/icb.topic58474/GradingPapers.html>

<http://trc.virginia.edu/Publications/Teaching_Concerns/Spring_1996/TC_Spring_1996_Maznevski.htm>

Late work will lose 3 points (out of 100) per 24 hours, starting immediately after the assignment is due. Exceptions will only be granted for documented illness. Any missing work will be graded 0 unless you submit a written explanation, a plan for completing the work, and receive my approval for your plan. Please talk to the instructor if you're having problems.

The Vanderbilt Honor Code governs all course requirements. **Violations include, but are not limited to, failure to properly credit sources in a paper, copying other students’ answers to quiz questions, turning in all or part of a paper written for another course without prior permission from both instructors, inflating time logged in a project**. Student study groups and, with instructor’s prior approval, collaboration on projects are permissible. If you have any doubts how the Honor Code applies, please ask the instructor for clarification. Uncertainty about the application of the Honor Code does not excuse a violation.

Students who may need disability-related accommodations should contact the instructor and the Opportunity Development Center (322-4705) as soon as possible.

**SCHEDULE OF TOPICS, READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS**

The following schedule is flexible with respect to timing of topics. Assignment due dates in bold are not expected to change. The exact schedule of topics and reading assignments may change. Look on OAK Syllabus for any changes & try to obtain a classmate's notes on any class you miss.

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| Class | Date | Day | ***Reading/Topic*** |
| 1 | 8.22 | Th | Overview of course, syllabus, requirementsSmall Group Discussion: What is my community and what are its strengths and weaknesses? |
| 2 | 8.27 | Tu | Kloos et al: Preface + About Authors + Chapter 1. Introducing Community Psychology |
| **ORIGINS OF COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY** |
| 3 | **8.29** | Th | **Post Seminar Paper Topic to OAK Discussion; Any questions/need suggestions-Email instructor;** Ch. 2. How Has Community Psychology Developed? + Limitations of traditional psychology: behavioral, social, clinical & testing psychologyRECOMMENDED:  [Perkins, D.D. (2009). The death of community psychology (and the development of community research & action) in the United States: Issues of theoretical, methodological, and practical diversity](https://my.vanderbilt.edu/perkins/files/2011/09/Perkins.2009.Death_of_CP__dev_of_CRA_in_US.doc). In International Community Psychology: Shared Agendas in Diversity (pp. 285-314). |
| 4 | 9.3 | Tu | Topics: Deinstitutionalization, Housing and Homelessness + Examples of international Community Psychology: **Required Supplemental Reading** [see E-reserves]:Tsemberis, Sam. (1999). From streets to homes: An innovative approach to supported housing for homeless adults with psychiatric disabilities. *Journal of Community Psychology, 27*(2), 225-241. (READ INTRO & STUDY 1: pp. 225-233)[Perkins, D. D. (2009). International Community Psychology: Development and Challenges.](https://my.vanderbilt.edu/perkins/files/2011/09/Perkins.2009.International-CP.AJCP_.pdf%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)*[American Journal of Community Psychology, 44](https://my.vanderbilt.edu/perkins/files/2011/09/Perkins.2009.International-CP.AJCP_.pdf%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)*[, 76–79](https://my.vanderbilt.edu/perkins/files/2011/09/Perkins.2009.International-CP.AJCP_.pdf%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank).  |
| 5 | 9.5 | Th | Ch. 3. The Aims of Community Research, Ecological Theory & Methods |
| 6 | 9.10 | Tu | Ch. 4. Methods of Community Psychology Research. |
| 7 | 9.12 | Th | SUPPLEMENTAL READING: Marris, E. (2011). Darwin's city. *Nature, 474*, 146-149.Community/Ecological Research Methods |
| 8 | 9.17 | Tu | Ch. 5. Understanding Individuals Within Environments. |
| 9 | 9.19 | Th |  |
| 10 | 9.24 | Tu | Ch. 6. Understanding Community. |
| 11 | 9.26 | Th |  |
| 12 | 10.1 | Tu | Ch. 7. Understanding Human Diversity. |
| 13 | 10.3 | Th | “Deviance” and diversity issues in CP, psychology, the helping services, societyHomework/Small gp. discussion: How would you write your own personal narrative about one or more diversity issues (ancestry, gender, religion, sexual orientation, SES, etc.) that has affected your life? Have you or anyone in your family ever been or felt "oppressed" for any reason? On what basis? How did that make you feel? Did it give you empathy for groups or individuals who may have suffered even greater oppression? Can you think of an instance when you were, or might have been perceived as, an oppressor? |
| **14** | **10.8** | **Tu** | **Seminar Paper DUE, discussed in class** |
|  | 10.10 | Th | ***FALL BREAK – NO CLASS*** |
| 15 | 10.15 | Tu | Ch. 8. Understanding Stress and Coping in Context |
| 16 | 10.17 | Th | Select an advocacy or mutual help group/website whose cause you support to briefly present in classSUPPLEMENTAL READING: Read also: [National Institutes of Health: Adult Stress FAQs](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/stress/stress_factsheet_ln.pdf)RECOMMENDED: Maton, K. I. (1989). Community settings as buffers of life stress? Highly supportive churches, mutual help groups, and senior centers. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 17*(2), 203-232. |
| 17 | 10.22 | Tu |  Ch. 9. Prevention and Promotion: Key Concepts. |
| 18 | 10.24 | Th |  “[Drug & alcohol abuse on rise” article](http://www.insidevandy.com/news/safety/article_939ff109-0457-5007-acba-b8659a4db2b7.html%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) in *Vandy Hustler* |
| 19 | 10.29 | Tu | Ch.10. Prevention and Promotion: Implementing Programs. |
| 20 | 10.31 | Th | Read: Rolling Stone article on substance abuse policy and researchRecommended:Nation et al. (2003). What works in prevention: Principles of effective prevention programs. *American Psychologist*.Reynolds, A.J., Temple, J.A., Ou, S.-R., Arteaga, I.A., & White, B.A.B. (2011). School-Based Early Childhood Education and Age-28 Well-Being: Effects by Timing, Dosage, and Subgroups. *Science Express (online)*(June 9, 2011), 1-9. |
| 21 | 11.5 | Tu | Ch. 11. Citizen Participation and Empowerment. |
| 22 | 11.7 | Th | SUPPLEMENTAL READING: [Perkins, D.D. (2010). Empowerment. In R.A. Couto (Ed.), Political and Civic Leadership (pp. 207-218). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage](https://my.vanderbilt.edu/perkins/files/2011/09/25.Empowerment_chapter.penultimate_draft.doc)Recommended:[Manzo, L.C., & Perkins, D.D. (2006). Finding common ground: The importance of place attachment to community participation and planning. Journal of Planning Literature, 20, 335-350.](http://my.vanderbilt.edu/perkins/files/2011/09/ManzoPerkins.2006.Neighborhoods-as-common-ground.JPL_.pdf%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)[Perkins, D.D., Hughey, J., & Speer, P.W. (2002). Community psychology perspectives on social capital theory and community development practice. Journal of the Community Development Society, 33(1), 33-52.](https://my.vanderbilt.edu/perkins/files/2011/09/Perkins_Hughey_Speer-JCDS-33-no1-2002.pdf)Stokols, D. (1992). Establishing and maintaining healthy environments: Toward a social ecology of health promotion. *American Psychologist, 47*, 6-22. |
| 23 | 11.12 | Tu | Ch. 12. Community and Social Change. |
| 24 | 11.14 | Th | READ Intro [pp. 1-6] & see maps: [Medoff, P., & Sklar, H. (1994).](http://books.google.com/books?id=SrRF5Prt7NgC&pg=PA7&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=4" \l "v=onepage&q&f=false" \t "_blank) *[Streets of hope: The fall and rise of an urban neighborhood](http://books.google.com/books?id=SrRF5Prt7NgC&pg=PA7&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=4" \l "v=onepage&q&f=false" \t "_blank)*[. Boston: South End Press.](http://books.google.com/books?id=SrRF5Prt7NgC&pg=PA7&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=4" \l "v=onepage&q&f=false" \t "_blank) |
| **25** | **11.19** | **Tu** | **Draft Community or Organizational Setting Analyses summarized in class, final draft due end of semester** |
| 26 | 11.21 | Th | Ch. 13. Program Evaluation and Program Development. |
|  |  |  | **THANKSGIVING BREAK-NO CLASSES** |
| **27** | **12.3** | **Tu** | Ch. 14. Looking Ahead. |
| **28** | **12.5** | **Th** | **Last class: Community site visits/intervention experiences presented** |
|  | **12.12** | W | **Final draft of Community Setting Analysis + Map + Site Visit/Intervention Experience Report, field notes & log DUE** |