

## **Sociology 591 - Building Community Capacity: A Service Learning Approach**

Winter Quarter, 2010

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Any student with disability concerns should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Most importantly, be sure to contact the Office for Disability Services in a timely manner (150 Pomerene Hall, 292-3307). They will coordinate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. This syllabus and other course material is available in alternative formats upon request. For further information please contact Undergraduate Student Services, 292-1175.

### **Overview**

This service learning course provides students with an understanding of the past, present and future of cities and of the community capacity building process in cities. We will explore the basic concepts, methods, and approaches used when sociology is put into practice in urban, organizational settings. You will get outside of the classroom to practice sociology IN community, nonprofit organizational settings. By being of service to and with a nonprofit organization, you will experience both the challenges and joys of actually contributing directly to improving the life chances of whatever group or groups the organization serves. You will explore both the theory and the practice of community capacity building. By doing so, we will strengthen your understanding of the bridge between service outside of the classroom, and community studies inside the classroom.

My goal is for you to better understand how and why communities are in the current state they are in, and what decisions and actions in the past, shape the present and future of urban communities. Each of us make contributions to urban quality of life. And in this class you will learn through service, working with and being of service, to individual organizations.

### **Required Texts:**

- 1) Chaskin, Robert J., Prudence Brown, Sudhir Venkatesh and Avis Vidal. 2001. *Building Community Capacity*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- 2) Langton, Phyllis Ann and Dianne Anderson Kammerer. 2005. *Practicing Sociology in the Community: A Student's Guide*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice-Hall.
- 3) Posted articles on the course website.

### **Required Community Participation:**

Make **meaningful** contributions to one (of four) capacity building small group projects. The

quality of your contributions will be assessed by me – and by your fellow small group, community members (i.e., peer evaluations). Like all community capacity building, the success of your small group project is dependent upon the assets you and (all) other community members contribute to the collective outcome.

### **Scope and Expectations:**

This course is designed to introduce you to the main concepts, theories and methods of building community capacity, an area of community studies and urban sociology. I hope that we accomplish five things during the term: (1) broaden your perspective and understanding of the processes that shape community life and neighborhood change; (2) make individual and collective contributions to community as a process of social change (i.e., engage in the *praxis* of sociology); (3) help you gain a greater appreciation of persistent societal conflicts in society, which often result from reactions to social, economic and cultural differences in urban areas; (4) expose you to the language, history, and key researchers of community capacity; and, perhaps most importantly, (5) help you to think more critically--that is, to evaluate explanations for yourselves, and assess conceptual strengths and weaknesses, while understanding both. We are all agents of change, and learning through service is one means of valuing how you contribute to the change our present and future demands. Thus, **your questions and comments about the course texts, films, and projects are strongly encouraged, as regular class participation is essential.**

As you have in prior courses, I strongly urge you to continue taking full responsibility for your own education in this one as well. For example, our class will meet 19 times. There is often a strong, positive relationship between class attendance, project participation and grade performance (generally, as one goes up, so do the others). Because we will typically cover a lot of material on any given day, missing more than one or two classes could create major problems, both for the exams and for effective participation in your community team. This is especially true because I will sometimes lecture about research and issues that are NOT covered in the textbooks. If you cannot avoid missing a class, you should perhaps arrange to obtain notes from another student.

### **TEST DATES:**

*EXAM 1* (Midterm) - Wednesday, February 11; *EXAM 2* (Comprehensive Final) - **Monday, March 10 (11:30am-1:18pm)**. Your *GROUP PROJECT PAPER* is due on Tuesday, March 11 (i.e., the Tuesday of Finals Week). Your group project oral presentations will occur during our second to last day of class (Monday, March 9).

**MAKE-UP EXAM PREVENTION!!** No make-up exams or late assignments will be considered, except when a documented illness, or personal/family emergency occurs. **Proper**

**documentation must be provided.** If you have an unavoidable conflict with either exam, be sure to see me a week or more **in advance** of the test date, so that we can create an alternative test-taking arrangement.

## GRADES:

Your final course grade will be made up of: 1) two in-class exams (midterm and final); 2) your building community project participation (research contributions/peer evaluations); 3) one group presentation; 4) one group project paper; 5) your individual capacity building journal entries; and, 6) your individual class attendance, in-class responses and participation. The exams will have multiple choice, short answer, matching and sentence completion questions on them. Both exams will count 25%. The paper requirements are described in detail below and will be 12% toward your final grade, and the (group) oral presentation is 10%. Your individual project participation and (group) midterm paper are both 5%. The remaining 18% will be from your in-class responses (10%) and your journal entries (8%). In a class of this size you should feel free to participate with a question or comment pertinent to the topic. Plus throughout the quarter, we'll have some small group/community exercises in class, and it is important to make a contribution to them as well.

### The proportion of each graded course component:

1)	23%	Midterm and Final Exam
2)	12%	Community Project Paper
3)	8%	Group Project Presentation
4)	8%	Group Article Presentation
5)	8%	In-Class Response Papers
6)	8%	Journaling*
7)	5%	Peer Evaluations
8)	<u>5%</u>	<u>Class participation</u>
	100%	Final Grade

\* = Two (2) of the journal submissions must reflect on your direct service participation w/ organization.

Journaling Due Dates

(START of class on):

Wed., Jan. 21 (5)

Mon., Feb. 9 (10)

Wed., Feb. 25 (15)

Wed., March 11 (19)

The exam and Final Grade scale is as follows:

A	93-100	B	83-86	C	73-76
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D	63-69

## COMMUNITY PROJECT PAPER:

Each of you will be a member of a community/project group. Each community group will focus on one of four community capacity organizations, and will complete a community capacity assessment and research review. To do so, each group (member) will: **I**) participate in and contribute to group meetings during class; **II**) complete a minimum of five (5) total direct service, organization contact hours; **III**) complete two (or more) journal entries about your service participations; **IV**) research the organization's a) history, b) mission, c) leadership process and/or style, d) relational framework for capacity building, e) patterns of change over time, f) potential limitations/weaknesses, g) primary assets, h) core contributions to improving community capacity, and, i) provide 2-4 overall capacity assessment conclusions; **V**) make sustained, substantial contributions to a (single) 12-15 page group research paper documenting each of the nine dimensions listed in **IV** (a-i) above; and, **VI**) help make a 20 minute oral presentation which illustrates to the class how the organization enhances local

community capacity.

**This community project and paper must reflect the contributions of every group member**, and the presentation must be made by no fewer than three group members. The paper and presentation must consider the concepts of capacity building, empowerment, life chances, and social change. They must exhibit an understanding of each of these concepts and the relationship(s) between them. The specific (preliminary) division of labor used for these two graded items (paper and presentation) will be determined in a team meeting on or before Class #3.

A successful paper should be no more than 15 pages of text (double spaced, no less than a 12-point font), should provide tables, figures or other nontext images, and should incorporate resources from the sociological literature (i.e., two or more published research articles or related books) and organizational leadership.

The paper must provide the reader with clear and effective answers to the following six questions: 1) What is the basic history of the organization? 2) In what 3-5 ways does its mission contribute to community capacity (provide a rationale for these being the 3-5 most important organizational expressions of capacity)? 3) How does the organization demonstrate/engage (in) the components of Chaskin et al.'s relational framework (p. 12), and enhance quality of life outcomes (first identify the relevant components, then demonstrate their engagement)? 4) What are the 2-3 most critical organizational changes that have occurred, either recently or historically? Why these? 5) What are the 2-3 most pressing organizational weaknesses/limitations, or areas of future change? 6) *What answers to these questions are given by an organizational leader or longtime participant (i.e., an organizational contact must be interviewed via phone or email. Provide me with the relevant follow up information)?* and, 7) **In what 2-3 important ways has the organization helped your group better understand the community capacity building process?** A successful presentation should (at least) briefly answer questions 1), 2), 3), 5) and, 6) above, within a time-efficient 15-20 minutes.

The Community Capacity Project organizational alternatives are:

- 1) Community Connection (Columbus, OH)  
<http://www.communityconnectionohio.com/> , 614-252-0660
- 2) Mid-Ohio Workers Association (Columbus, OH)  
(614) 262-0567
- 3) Reconstruction, Inc. (Philadelphia, PA)  
<http://www.reconstructioninc.org/> , (215) 223-8180
- 4) Rock on the Block (Columbus, OH)  
<http://www.rockonblock.org//> , 614 299-6343

### **OTHER COURSE POLICIES:**

First, there will be no extra credit work to do. Your final grade will depend solely on the seven course components described above. Second, please note the "fine print" of our social contract. It

concerns ACADEMIC INTEGRITY. Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception and is an educational objective of The Ohio State University. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, forgery, fabrication of information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, unauthorized prior possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, tampering with the academic work of other students, and lying to the instructor. Anyone shown to be academically dishonest is subject to receiving an "E" class grade, being reported to their department head, possible suspension and additional penalties consistent with Ohio State's undergraduate student policies.

### CLASS ASSIGNMENTS AND SCHEDULE:

<u>Class #</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1 [M]	01-05	What is this COURSE about? Course Overview, Introductions, Building Community
2 [W]	01-07	What is COMMUNITY? Definition, <a href="http://www.infed.org/community/community.htm">http://www.infed.org/community/community.htm</a> Chaskin et al. – Introduction (pp. 1-6), Group Selection
3 [M]	01-12	What are COMMUNITY CAPACITY, community-based learning? Chaskin et al. – Ch. 1 (pp. 7-26), Lang/Kamm. – Ch. 1 (pp. 1-12)
4 [W]	01-14	What is GOVERNMENT’S role in community capacity building? <b>Mr. Bruce Black, Neighborhood Pride</b> (Mayor’s Office) Chaskin et al. – Relational Framework (pp. 12) Lang/Kamm. – Ch. 1 (pp. 13-22)
NO CLASS	01-19	Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
5 [W]	01-21	What is the HISTORY of American urbanization? Hart (1890) – “The Rise of American Cities” Understanding Cities (film) <i>Journal #1 DUE TODAY!</i>
6 [M]	01-26	How has HISTORICAL MIGRATION been shaped by community capacity? Price-Spratlen (2008) – “Urban Destination Selection in the 1950s”
7 [W]	01-28	How does LEADERSHIP matter? What is practicing sociology? Chaskin et al. – Ch. 2 (pp. 27-44) “Leadership Building Strategies” Lang/Kamm. – Ch. 2 (pp. 23-46) “Practicing Sociology”
8 [M]	02-02	What is the role of NONPROFIT ORGS. in comm. capacity? <b>Ms. Kendra Roberts, CityYear</b> (Columbus, OH office) Chaskin et al. – Ch. 2 (pp. 44-59) “Leadership Building Strategies”

- 9 [W] 02-04 How does NEIGH. CULTURE influence community capacity?  
Langton and Kammerer – Ch. 3 (pp. 47-66)  
Chaskin et al. – Ch. 3 (pp. 61-65, 88-91)  
Flag Wars (film)
- 10 [M] 02-09 Why is ORGANIZATIONAL DEV. essential to capacity building?  
Chaskin et al. – Ch. 3 (pp. 65-91)  
Midterm Exam Review  
*Journal #2 DUE TODAY!*
- 11 [W] 02-11 **MIDTERM EXAM**
- 12 [M] 02-16 How does COMM. ORGANIZING shape capacity building?  
Chaskin et al. – Ch. 4 (pp. 93-122)  
Holding Ground (film)
- 13 [W] 02-18 What METHODS inform capacity (field) research?  
Lang/Kamm. – Chs. 4 and 5 (pp. 67-113)
- 14 [M] 02-23 How does FAITH and SACRED SPACE inform capacity building?  
**Reverend Orinda Brinkley**, St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Hild (2006) – “Places and States of Mind for Healing”
- 15 [W] 02-25 Community Capacity Challenges: Access, TRANSPORTATION  
Chaskin et al. – Ch. 5 (pp. 123-157) “Collaborations, Partnerships”  
Taken for a Ride (film)  
*Journal #3 DUE TODAY!*
- 16 [M] 03-02 Community Capacity Challenges: HOMELESSNESS  
Lee, Price-Spratlen and Kanan (2004) “Structural Determinants”
- 17 [W] 03-04 Community Capacity Challenges: PRISON INDUS'L. COMPLEX  
**Mr. Randy Baker**, Community Connection  
Review Chaskin et al. – Ch. 4 (pp. 93-112)
- 18 [M] 03-09 What links capacity building and SOCIAL JUSTICE?  
Lang/Kamm. – Ch. 6 (pp. 114-127) “Engaging Social Justice”  
Community Team Presentations – Part 1
- 19 [W] 03-11 What can/will FUTURE COMMUNITY CAPACITY actually do?  
Chaskin et al. – Ch. 6 (pp. 159-180) “Possibilities, Next Steps”  
Finals Review  
Community Team Presentations – Part 2  
*Journal #4 DUE TODAY!*

**NOTE: The final exam is scheduled for Monday, March 16 (11:30am-1:18pm).** All information in this syllabus is subject to change as circumstances demand.

**NOTE #2:** Your community team project paper is **due Tuesday, March 17 at 5pm** (in my

Townshend Hall mailbox).

Academic Misconduct

**It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct ([http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info\\_for\\_students/csc.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp)).**