Community Psychology Capstone

UNST 421, Section 302
Portland State University, Winter 2019

Course Description: This two-term capstone course introduces students to the principles of community psychology research and action and provides guidelines for applying these principles in field settings. Community psychology includes theories and methods that place the needs of individuals, families, and organizations within broader social contexts. Students work collaboratively with community agency staff ("community partners") to address a critical organizational need. This year's community partners are Domestic Violence Safe Dialogue (DVSD) and EMERJ-SafeNow.

Time: Monday & Wednesday 11:30pm – 1:20pm
Location: Science and Education Center (SEC) 159
We may also use the Community Psychology Office (Cramer Hall Room 364)

Instructor: Kate Sackett Kerrigan, M.S.
Cramer Hall, Room 367
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Email/Telephone: ksackett@pdx.edu (503) 725-3955
Course Website: https://d2l.pdx.edu

Office hours: My office hours are by appointment. You can also leave a note in my Psychology Department mail box. *Please communicate with me over email via my pdx.edu address rather than through D2L.*

Required Text: A number of online articles, available through the course D2L page or the PSU library, will be used for class assignments. These readings help create a foundation for community psychology research and action and foster an understanding of key concepts.

Partner Agencies: *Domestic Violence Safe Dialogue.* DVSD's mission is to stop the cycle of domestic violence by facilitating safe, supervised conversations between survivors and offenders who have never met before, which help both parties foster transformative change inside themselves and others. After 18 years as a stand alone program, DVSD went under the umbrella of Lutheran Community Services (lcsnw.org) on July 1, 2018. Lutheran Community Services Northwest helps vulnerable children, families, immigrants and others overcome life's most difficult challenges to become flourishing members of society. Read more at dvsdprogram.com. Our primary partner here will be Matt Johnston, MA, LPC, CADC II, Program Director (mattjohnston@lcsnw.org). We may also collaborate with previous or current DVSD participants and Lutheran Community Services staff.

EMERJ-SafeNow. EMERJ-SafeNow develops and delivers culturally specific trauma-informed personal safety education in collaboration with communities, to ensure everyone, especially vulnerable, adults, children and families, has access to resources, training and skills on topics related to violence prevention. Read more at emerjsafenow.org. Our primary partners here will be Carolyne Haycraft, M.Ed., MFA, Co-Founder and Executive Director (carolyne@emerjsafenow.org) and Aman Weaver, Facilitator and Curriculum Development Specialist (aman@emerjsafenow.org). We may also collaborate with other members of their team.

University Studies Goals

The University Studies goals are an integral part of this course offering. You will see these themes show up in our classroom activities and assignments throughout the term. Here's the full text for each of the University Studies Goals:

Communication - Students will enhance their capacity to communicate in various ways—writing, graphics, numeracy, and other visual and oral means—to collaborate effectively with others in group work, and to be competent in appropriate communication technologies.

Inquiry and Critical Thinking - Students will learn various modes of inquiry through interdisciplinary curricula- problem-posing, investigating, conceptualizing- in order to become active, self-motivated, and empowered learners.

Diversity, Equity, and Social Justice- Students will explore and analyze identity, power relationships, and social justice in historical contexts and contemporary settings from multiple perspectives.

Ethics and Social Responsibility - Students will expand their understanding of the impact and value of individuals and their choices on society, both intellectually and socially, through group projects and collaboration in learning communities.

Course Philosophy, Roles, Structure and Guidelines

I. Course Philosophy

A. *General Aims*
This course provides opportunities for students to work with community organizations focused on community psychology research and action related to social change. Students actively apply community psychology theory to practice, developing skills in participatory research & action. Students also focus on enhancing presentation, technical writing, and team participation skills.

B. *Partnerships within a Community Psychology Context*
Your work in this capstone will focus on applied aspects of community psychology with a particular emphasis on group dynamics and participatory research & action. Group theory will form the basis of practical approaches to creating high functioning project work groups. Consultation and empowerment evaluation strategies grounded in the research literature will provide a structure for project groups' efforts in the community.

C. *A Commitment to Partnership and Collaborative Group Work*
Although community-based service is an important component of community psychology, the work of the community psychologist goes beyond providing volunteer or other service. Students in this class should think of themselves as "consultants" who bring expertise and resources to the community partner organization in helping them address important questions regarding their organizational and its relationship to the larger community. Student "consultation teams" are supported by a faculty member who serves as a supportive consultant to the teams. Consultation teams are also supported by key partner organization staff members who bring unique community and field knowledge to the table, as well as their professional expertise.

Consulting teams will assist the community partner in completing a project that reflects a key partner organization need which falls within the context of community psychology. For example, a community partner might be interested in developing ways to enhance its volunteer component, to recruit more volunteers, train them more thoroughly, and ensure more long-term volunteering. One approach would be to have community psychology students act directly as volunteers with the organization. This provides a group of dedicated volunteers for six months of one year, and thus meets an important partner organization need. However, such an approach does not meet the long-term needs of the organization and doesn't address the more fundamental concern of how the organization might restructure its recruitment or training activities to ensure a steady stream of long-term volunteers who are able to meet the organization's needs on an ongoing basis.

Instead of simply providing volunteer "person power," the community psychology consultation team could work with the community partner to develop, implement, and fine-tune volunteer recruitment, training, and maintenance activities. As a result, community psychology capstone students' time investment leverages many hundreds of future volunteer hours for the organization. This approach also maximizes students' opportunities to practice the application of community psychology principles within a consultation framework. Another approach would be to redefine the problem by identifying approaches to addressing the organization's needs other than through volunteers, or to identify resources and capacities that the organization could further develop to address better its needs.

II. Structure and Roles

This course has been structured to fulfill the basic goals of the PSU capstone program while helping students enhance their community psychology knowledge and develop basic community partnership skills. Course structure and roles:

A. Two-Term Requirement. Students in community psychology make a commitment to take the course for 2 terms. Winter and Spring terms will fulfill the University's Capstone Requirement. This allows students to fully design, implement, and evaluate their work in the community in a realistic time frame.

B. Consulting Teams and Sub-Committees. Two project teams will be established to work on the two class projects, and each team will include two sub-committees that focus on a specific component of each project. Each sub-committee is organized, and in large part, governed by the students comprising that work group. Members of each sub-committee are responsible for developing an effectively functioning work group, promoting the principles of community psychology, and fulfilling the goals of the capstone project with the community partner. In the second week of class, partner organization representatives will deliver presentations regarding their organization and the project they want to accomplish in partnership with PSU community psychology capstone students. After presentations from our partners (Week 2), students will be asked to submit their 1st and 2nd choices (Week 3) for the specific Project and Sub-Committee that they would like to join. Every effort will be made to support students' group preference. However, since the goal is four ~equal size sub-committees, students may have to be flexible. If students cannot be assigned simply based on preference, a decision will be made based on the flip of a coin (or other similar procedure).

C. Community Partners. The community organizations (or "community partners") are co-participating clients in this capstone course and the focus of the consultations. They have graciously opened their organizations to us, and our commitment is to fulfill our consultation contracts. The organizations will have designated staff members who will function as a liaison between each community

partner and the project groups. These individuals will facilitate the acquisition of resources necessary for project completion and will provide insights regarding organization/agency mission, culture, and tradition. They are the ultimate authority regarding what is possible and what is acceptable at each partner organization. These individuals will also provide evaluations of project groups' performance and will be in regular contact with Kate throughout both terms.

D. Faculty Consultation. The primary role of the Community Psychology course instructor is as a consultant to the consultation teams. Kate has been conducting research and action consultation projects with community organizations here in Portland for the past 4 years. Her experience includes conducting community needs assessments, program evaluations, program development, and community based research design and implementation. Unlike traditional classes, the primary method for conveying the instructor's expertise will not (usually) be through classroom lectures, but rather through regular meetings with each consulting team and multiple project group discussions about community psychology and the process of consultation. Although Kate will meet with each project group weekly, **it is the responsibility of the groups to ask for additional assistance when they need it.** As students in Community Psychology, it is not expected that you are "experts" in the art of Community Psychology or consultation (not yet!), and it is the job of the faculty consultant to support you as you learn.

Project groups will usually meet with Kate each Monday for approximately 20 minutes during class time. Discussions will be based on "Project Worksheets" and weekly group minutes submitted electronically. The faculty consultation will focus on a review of tasks and a discussion of "key issues" identified on the worksheets. On Wednesday, when groups are not meeting with faculty, they will be working on Project Group Planning Worksheets which assist them in preparing for their weekly meetings with partner organization staff. Kate will also be available for consultation meetings with project groups by appointment, when additional consultation time is needed. Groups that are struggling with an issue, whether it relates to internal functioning of the consulting teams, questions regarding consultation or how to communicate with community partners, should contact Kate immediately. A mark of professionalism is knowing when to ask for assistance and to do so before a problem reaches a point of crisis.

E. Weekly Schedule. The first three weeks of Winter term will provide orientation and background. A regular schedule of activities will begin during the fourth week of the quarter. **Mondays** will begin with topical lectures and the discussions that follow. Kate will meet with each of the consulting groups separately or as a full class to discuss progress, answer questions, and facilitate planning for the Wednesday meeting (or other agreed-upon weekly time) with the community partner. On **Wednesdays,** project groups can meet with community partners, as a project group, and/ or with Kate. Students will arrange additional hours during the week (at least 5 hours on average) to complete the work of their project group. This will involve a combination of time in project group meetings,

additional meetings with community partners, or other activities fulfilling the activities of the agreed-upon project (e.g., collecting and analyzing data, conducting key informant interviews, meeting with other organization staff, etc.). Each week, individual group members will more than likely be assigned tasks to complete individually or in collaboration with organization staff and/or other project group members.

III. Course Requirements

A. Individual Responsibility. Students participating in this course have a variety of responsibilities. These include:

1. Attendance and participation – Given the experiential nature of this class, attendance is critical to meet individual learning objectives as well as to ensure effective functioning of the project groups. Attendance and participation will be recorded at each class session. Each student can miss two out of 19 classes without penalty.

2. Required Readings – Readings should be completed prior to the class meeting in which they are due. These readings will be incorporated into both process discussions and project consultations.

3. Reading Notes – Reading notes are due in person at the beginning of class on the dates indicated in the Course Schedule. These involve responding to the reading reflection question(s) provided in the reading notes template. Notes should be ½ to one page, typed, single-spaced.

3. Reflection Notes – The purpose of reflective writing notes is to a) record observations, insights, and questions that occur as part of your Capstone experience and b) connect the course experiences to University Studies goals. Each set of notes should be 1 to 2 pages in length, typed, double-spaced, and submitted in person in class on the date due.

4. Final Reflection Paper – The purpose of this paper (3 to 4 double-spaced pages) is to reflect on your experience working on the capstone project over the course of the entire term. There is flexibility in how you write this reflection paper, but it must contain the following:
- Observations, insights, and questions that have occurred as part of your Capstone experience.
- What has worked well for you individually (or what strengths you bring to your group), and where do you see room for improvement?
- What has worked well for your group, and where do you see room for improvement?
- How has working on the capstone project or completing capstone readings/ discussions helped you fulfill the University Studies

goals for this capstone indicated on pg. 2 of the syllabus? What else would help you fulfill these goals?

B. Group Responsibilities

1. Group goals/ objectives and meeting minutes: This worksheet is started during the Monday class meeting and completed over the course of the week based on meetings with community partners and internal meetings of the project group. The group should assign one member to be responsible for taking and submitting the notes electronically on the Google Doc form in your group's PSU Google Drive folder. These must be submitted **by noon each Friday** and should be in **outline form** with the following headings:

I. THIS WEEK'S FOCUS (Specify Objectives & Tasks);
II. PROGRESS MADE (Including who worked on what this week);
III. ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED NEXT WEEK,
IV. WHICH GROUP MEMBERS ARE ASSIGNED TO EACH ISSUE OR TASK FOR NEXT WEEK, AND
V. ISSUES TO DISCUSS WITH Kate on Monday.

EACH GROUP MEMBER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR REVIEWING AND APPROVING THE NOTES NO LATER THAN THE FOLLOWING MONDAY AT 9 AM

2. Contribution to course project. The most important requirement is that you and your group complete the project and all deliverables for the community partner. You will be graded on the quality of the final product that your group submits at the end of the term. The specifics of this product/deliverable will be negotiated throughout the course of the term and in collaboration with the community partner. Students are required to keep track of their specific contributions to the project in the weekly goals/ minutes Google Doc described above. These notes will be reviewed by and discussed with group members and Kate.

3. PowerPoint Oral Report on Project Progress – Each consulting team will present a 20- to 25-minute presentation on their progress during the quarter to the class. Each group member is required to do a 5 minute presentation as their contribution to the report. The Oral Report should be of professional quality, utilizing PowerPoint slides and handouts.

For all individual and group assignments, due dates are provided in the Course Schedule

IV. Evaluation/Grading

Your grade will be based upon completion of the following:

(1) 25%: Attendance and participation (I)
(2) 10%: Reading notes (I)
(3) 10%: Reflection notes (I)
(4) 15% Final reflection paper (I)
(5) 30%: Course project and project deliverables (G)
(6) 10%: Final oral presentation (G)

Grades will be computed on the following scale:

A = 93-100	A- = 90-92	B+ = 87-89
B = 83-86	B- = 80-82	C+ = 77-79
C = 73-76	C- = 70-72	D+ = 67-69
D = 63-66	D- = 60-62	F = below 60

A Note On Missed Work

Please note that since the focus of this capstone is research & action in collaboration with community partners and much of the work is experiential it is generally not possible to make up missed group work or to be excused from attending class meetings. As a courtesy to your colleagues, please be sure to inform a team member if you become ill or have an emergency that interferes with your attendance and/or your responsibilities. It is each individual's personal responsibility to arrange coverage with other team members and let Kate know about any absence. If it interferes with work at the community organization, please also get in touch (or leave a message for) the community partner.

Since individual assignments are submitted in person, there should be little reason for missing deadlines. Late assignments will lose 20% credit but may be turned in within one class period of the assigned due date. *Please let Kate know in advance if you have any scheduling conflicts that she should be aware of.*

Access and Inclusion for Students with Disabilities

PSU values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to fostering mutual respect and full participation for all students. My goal is to create a learning environment that is equitable, useable, inclusive, and welcoming. If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, please notify me. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment. If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The DRC is located in 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, 503-725-4150, drc@pdx.edu, https://www.pdx.edu/drc.

Student Behavior

Capstone classes in general, and this course in particular, represent a unique learning situation that places students in the position of consultant and budding community professional. You will be interacting with the community partner's staff and participants/clients and involved in assisting them in developing programmatic materials. You will be representing Portland State

University, the Psychology Department, and in some cases, the community partner's organization. With these opportunities comes greater responsibility and an expectation for a higher standard of behavior. As a result, unethical or inappropriate behavior, as determined by Kate and the partner community organization supervisor, cannot be tolerated. Depending upon the situation, behavior of this nature may result in being asked to drop the course, being failed for the course, or some other appropriate consequence.

Sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating/ domestic violence, and stalking
As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment for my students and for the campus as a whole. Please be aware that federal, state, and PSU policies require faculty members to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination. Similarly, PSU faculty are required to file a report if they have reasonable cause to believe that a child with whom they come into contact has suffered abuse, or that any person with whom they come into contact has abused a child. If you would rather share information about these experiences with an employee who does not have these reporting responsibilities and can keep the information confidential, please contact one of the following campus resources (or visit https://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/get-help)

- Women's Resource Center (503-725-5672)
- Queer Resource Center (503-725-9742)
- Center for Student Health and Counseling (SHAC): 1880 SW 6th Ave,
  - (503) 725-2800
- Student Legal Services: 1825 SW Broadway, (SMSU) M343, (503) 725-4556

Plagiarism and Student Conduct
A productive learning environment relies on our adherence to PSU Codes of Conduct: http://www.pdx.edu/dos/policies-codes-of-conduct-at-psu. In particular, please note that plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course. If you are quoting or relying heavily on another's work in your written assignments or class presentations, you must acknowledge the source.

A Note on Technology in the Classroom
No computers or cell phones should be used in class unless they are being used as part of a group work session, or you have documentation and approval to use them from DRC.

Transportation
You will be responsible for providing your own transportation to and from your capstone partner site.