Course Description:

This course will prepare students to engage in integrated practice focused on utilizing community and social systems to support and empower individuals, families, and communities. This will include skills for entering, assessing, and working collaboratively with client systems and their social networks. This course will build on practice methods presented in the foundation and platform methods courses and give special attention to partnership, strengths based, and empowering models of practice. Special emphasis will be placed on conducting this work in a multicultural context with vulnerable and oppressed populations and communities.

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of how community and social systems can play a role in improving the well being of individuals, families, organizations, and communities.
2. Identify the critical primary and secondary structures in communities that can be mobilized for engaging in practice.
3. Describe how the gender, racial, religious, economic, or other characteristics of a community affect the needs and assets to be mobilized in practice.
4. Demonstrate skills for engaging community systems and encouraging the participation of community members.
5. Identify how social work ethics and values can guide practice with community and social systems.

Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:

- Multiculturalism and Diversity will be addressed throughout this course through a focus on the ways in which the characteristics of individuals, families, and communities drive the approach to practice. This will include attention to race, gender, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, economic status, and sexual orientation.
- Social Justice and Social Change will be central to this course on multiple levels. Methods for increasing community participation and empowerment will be reviewed, and special attention will be given to developing methods that are democratic, participatory, and focused on equity and equality.

- Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation will be covered by considering how community and social systems can be mobilized toward promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation efforts. For example, community and social system involvement can be an integral element of the promotion of mental health, the prevention of mental illness, the treatment of mental distress, and the rehabilitation of the mentally disabled. This course will shed light on how these methods can be involved at these different types of practice focus.

- Behavioral and Social Science Research will form the basis of this course and will guide practice in working with community and social systems. For example, community and social systems practice is supported by research that suggests that well-being is enhanced by the involvement of social supports and social networks. In addition, social science methods will be introduced as a means for developing and evaluating specific practice methods.

**Course Responsibilities:**

**Course Content**
This course will cover practice methods for working with multiple social systems to promote well-being through the involvement of community and social systems. The primary focus will be on ways to work in partnership with the primary and secondary mediating and community support structures in communities, such as schools, CSOs, neighborhood associations, self-help organizations, community centers, and faith based organizations. Emphasis will be placed on ways in which different levels of practice, including interpersonal, organizational, community, and policy practice, can be involved in this kind of work. The focus of this practice will be on systems ranging in size from individuals to communities and/or national organizations.

Specific practice methods to be covered will include techniques for conflict resolution, change management, aspiration, advocacy, and service coordination; conducting community outreach and education; convening and working with community committees, coalitions, and planning boards; organizing and facilitating mutual aid and self help groups; and collaborating with communities to develop local programs and services. Undergirding all of these methods will be a focus on methods for encouraging community participation and empowerment.

**Course Format**
This course will use a seminar format to facilitate maximum participation. Specific reading assignments will be drawn from the reading list (textbook, course pack or Web), and students will be expected to discuss these in class. There will be an independent reflection essay, a “take home” exam, a group “best practices” project/presentation and discussion team assignments.
Course Materials (both available at Ulrich’s):

Course Pack: SW 697-003, Winter 2005, Professor Connor

**Course Assignments**

I. Due January 14, 2005 at noon. This personal reflection essay should be a vision of how you see applying the skills and values you have learned here at the School of Social Work in your career in community. A specific source should be used to frame this reflection: from your *Course Pack*, Ryan, et al, “Aligning Education and Practice…” No more than 3 double-spaced pages.

II. Due at end of class January 18, 2005, 11 teams will be identified to lead in-class discussions beginning February 1 thru April 19.

III. Due January 28, 2005. Six, 3+ member teams will prepare one page Group Project Outline and Work Assignments for “Best Practices” paper and presentation.

IV. Due April 4, 2005, at 5:00 PM. This “take home” exam will cover all of the assigned readings, lectures and class discussions, to date.

V. Group project/presentation. Spread across the last third of the course will be six group project/presentations on “best practices” in community systems. Format, research methods, samples and suggested community systems will be discussed in depth at the January 18, 2005 class meeting. On the day of assigned presentation, each group will: a) submit a 20-30 page paper, double-spaced, excluding bibliography and appendix, paper should be submitted in paper and CD-ROM formats; b) on the assigned date, present your findings and lead a class discussion for 60 minutes with presentation submitted on CD-ROM; and c) on the assigned date, each team member will submit, in confidence, their “participation” rating of all other team members.

**Grading Criteria**

A 100-point system will be used. At the end of the term, the numerical grades earned for each assignment plus class participation will be added and translated into letter grades using the following formula:

- A+ 97-100  
- A 94-96  
- A- 91-93  
- B+ 87-90  
- B 84-86  
- B- 81-83  
- C+ 77-80  
- C 74-76  
- C- 70-73  
- D <69  
- (no credit)

The points will be distributed on the following criteria:

- Class Participation 25 points (midway grade announced 2/22/05)
- Reflection Essay 10 points
- “Take Home” Exam 25 points
- Group Paper 25 points
- Group Presentation 15 points
Group Project/Presentation

Drawing upon concepts discussed in class, your group paper and presentation will analyze in depth “best practices” for specific community service delivery system. Your analysis should be based upon assigned class readings and additional literature related to your topic. You are encouraged to make personal contact with persons engaged with the service delivery system and to use the resources of the Internet to obtain current material. Format, research methods, samples and suggested community systems will be discussed in depth at the January 18, 2005 class meeting. Summarize descriptive information so that you can focus on analysis; lengthy descriptive material should be included in an appendix. Give special attention to those questions pertaining to administration, coordination, and accountability. Possible topics and dates are as follows:

- Homelessness System
- Job / Economic Development System
- Health System Access and Utilization
- School / Community System
- Domestic and Sexual Violence System
- Teen Pregnancy System
- Senior Services System
- Child and Family Services System

Class Participation

The Class Participation will be determined in the following manner:

1. On-Time Presence at each Class Session
2. Quality Participation in Class Discussion
3. Discussion Leader Performance
4. Group Project Peer Review
5. Attendance at all Group Project Presentations
SW 697-003

Course Schedule:

Community and Social Systems  
Tuesdays 8:00 AM to 11:00 AM

Joseph A. Connor  
January 11, 2005 – April 19, 2005

B684 SSWB

Tuesday January 11, 2005
Introductions and Overview

From Silos to Systems

Introductions: Frames and Expectations
Overview of Course and Requirements
Class Participation
Orientation to Community and Social Systems Practice
Dynamics of Our Changing Community Landscape

Reading:
Course Pack

Assignment:
Personal Reflection Essay. See Course Responsibilities, Due: E-mail by Noon
January 14, 2005

Tuesday January 18, 2005
Best Practices Research

Introduce: Community Systems
Developing Case Studies and Best Practices
Model: Best Practices Term Paper
Research: Interviews & Data

Samples: Community Literacy
Homelessness System: Mapping a Community System
“Lay of the Land” Research

Reading:
Course Pack
Bailey and Koney, “Interorganizational … Collaboratives: A Strategic Response”
The Collaboratory, “Community Literacy”
Stone and Butler, “Core Issues in Comprehensive, Community-Building
Initiatives: Power, Race and Community Research.”
Web Collaboratory, “Comprehensive Homelessness Systems: Comparative Approaches from Around the Country”

Assignment:
Determine Weekly Discussion Leader Teams by the end of class for last eleven (11) class meetings.

Tuesday January 25, 2005  Group Project Decisions

No Formal Class Meeting. Groups can meet during class time.

Assignment:

Tuesday February 1, 2005  Organizational Lifecycle

Introduction to Community Organizational Dynamics
Detail of Organizational Capacity and Lifecycle
  Programs
  Management
  Governance
  Financial Resources
  Systems / Connectivity
Empowerment Practice

Readings:
Course Pack
  Alexander, “The Impact of Devolution on Nonprofits.”
  Stevens, “Nonprofit Lifecycles” pp. 11-47

Tuesday February 8, 2005  Service Integration

Evolution and Devolution of Services
Roles of Government and Philanthropy
Service Integration
Caseworkers – Trapped by the System
Readings:

Course Pack

Felty & Jones, “Human Services at Risk”
Leon, “Family Support Model”
Nelson, “Found Difficult and Left Untried”
O’Looney, “Beyond Privatization and Service Integration”

Tuesday February 15, 2005 Community Systems

Chaos in Current Delivery System
Social Planning
Systems Theory / Approach to Service Delivery
Continuum of Care
Individual / System Dynamics

Readings:

Textbook
Connor & Kadel-Taras, “Community Visions, Community Solutions” pp. 1-17

Course Pack
Gummer, “Social Planning”

Web
Aspen Roundtable, “Voices from the Field II” pp 9-32
Collaboratory, “A Systems Approach to Community Improvement”
Collaboratory, “The Toledo Project for a Systems Approach to Homelessness”
Collaboratory, “Profile of the Current Toledo, Ohio Homelessness System”

Tuesday February 22, 2005 Community Systems II

Complex Community Problems (Polarity)
Thinking and Acting Strategically
Needs Assessment
Community Building
Collaboration

Readings:

Course Pack
Bailey and Koney, “Community-Based Consortia”
Mulroy and Shay, “Motivation and Reward…”
Kingsley, et al, “Community Building: Coming of Age”
Tuesday March 8, 2005 Impediments to Collaboration

Difficulty of Comprehensive Reforms
Change Model
Appropriations Process v. Holistic Initiatives
Blurring of the Sectors
Multisector Collaboration

Readings:

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<tr>
<td>Sandfort, “The Structural Impediments…”</td>
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<td>Blockson and Buren, “…an Argument for Multisector Collaboration…”</td>
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<td>Frumkin, “Going Beyond Efficiency”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annie E. Casey Foundation: “The Path of Most Resistance.”</td>
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<td>Connor &amp; Kadel-Taras, “Let’s Get It Done: Chapter 2”</td>
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Tuesday March 15, 2005 Funding Community Solutions

What Funders Want and Why They Rarely Get It
Strategies for Funding Solutions
Sustaining Community Problem Solving

Readings:

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<th>Textbook</th>
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<tr>
<td>Connor &amp; Kadel-Taras, “Community Visions, Community Solutions” pp. 19-50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pratt, “The Dynamics of Funding: Considering Reliability and Autonomy”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weiss &amp; Lopez, “New Strategies in Foundation Grantmaking: Children &amp; Youth”</td>
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<td>Connor et al, “Putting Our Heads Together: Learning from Funder Collaboratives”</td>
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Tuesday March 22, 2005  Community Leadership and Governance

Community Leadership
Servant Leadership
The Wheel of Community Governance
Role of the Community Board

Student Project:

Readings:

Textbook
Connor & Kadel-Taras, “Community Visions, Community Solutions” pp. 94-95

Course Pack
Hardie, “The Zen of Leadership: Understanding”
Newport, “Why Are We Replacing the Furniture…”
Chaskin & Abunimah, “A View From the City…”
Connor and Kadel-Taras, “Governing Outside:…”
Pew Partnership, “Crafting a New Design for Civic Leadership”

Tuesday March 29, 2005  Community Support Organization

Values and Common Ground
Conflict Resolution
Permission to Aspire
Community Support Organization – Roles and Activities

Student Project:

Readings:

Textbook
Connor & Kadel-Taras, “Community Visions, Community Solutions” pp. 51-93

Course Pack
Schorr et al, “Strategies to Achieve a Common Purpose”

Assignment:
Take Home Exam will be posted by noon March 30th. Due: E-mail by 5:00 PM April 4th
Leveraging Community Resources

Tuesday April 5, 2005

Asset Mapping
Disconnected v. Missing Resources
Delivery System Process Redesign
Management Information
Knowledge / Collaborative Technologies

Student Project:

Readings:
Course Pack
Osten & Weis, “Developing Enabling Networks and Systems of Support.”
Friedman, “Reforming Finance, Financing Reform.”

Web
Collaboratory, “Management Information Systems for Collaborative Approaches to Homelessness.”

Tuesday April 12, 2005

Community Outcomes and Evaluation

Discuss Mid-Term
Achieving and Measuring Community Outcomes
Program Outcomes v. System Outcomes
Outcome-Based Budgeting
Evaluation

Student Project:

Readings:
Course Pack

Web
Anne E. Casey Foundation, “Evaluating Comprehensive Community Change”
United Way of America, Clegg et al, “Managing the Transition…”
Dyer, “The Oregon Option” (Chapter 4)
Defining Community Capacity
Assessing Community Capacity
**National Support Organizations**
Federal Policy

**Two Student Projects:**

**Readings:**

*Course Pack*
- Chaskin, “Defining Community Capacity”
- Pew Partnership, “Planned Serendipity”
- Williams et al, “A Survey of Selected National Organizations…”

*Web*
- Laurent, “The Results Act is Dead; Long Live the Results Act”

Thank You