SW 650  Barry Checkoway  Community Development  Spring/Summer 2006

Course Description

This course examines methods of community development for a diverse democracy. It assesses the ways in which people join together, take initiative, and develop community-based programs, with or without assistance by outside agencies. It analyzes core concepts of community development, steps in the process, and perspectives on future practice in a society which values diversity as an asset.

The course assumes that community members are active participants and competent citizens who mobilize resources and build upon strengths, rather than problems in society or passive recipients of services. Emphasis is placed on increasing involvement of traditionally underrepresented groups in economically disinvested and racially segregated areas.

The course will draw upon best practices and lessons learned from community-based initiatives involving education, environment, health, housing, and neighborhood revitalization, in addition to social work, public health, urban planning, and related fields.

Course Objectives

- Understand the changing context and core concepts of community development in a diverse democratic society.

- Recognize alternative concepts of community as pluralist and multicultural units of solution.

- Develop knowledge of steps in the process, e.g., bringing people together, assessing community conditions, building organizational capacity, making action plans, increasing intergroup dialogue.

- Critically assess case studies and lessons learned from community-based practice.

- Identify issues of underrepresented groups in economically disinvested and racially segregated areas.

- Examine questions of ethics and values arising in the field.
Course Design

Responsibilities include readings, participation in discussions, written assignments, and individual and group exercises related to course objectives. Community collaborators and resource persons will address specific topics in areas of expertise.

Relationship of Course to Curricular Themes

**Multiculturalism and Diversity:** Students will identify ways in which community development can address race, ethnicity, class, gender, age, sexual orientation, and other forms of stratification of inequality.

**Social Justice and Social Change:** Emphasis is placed on how community development can strengthen social change and social justice through community building in economically disinvested and squinted areas.

**Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation:** The course will focus on how to prevent social problems and promote healthier communities rather than to take the frequent common curative model approach.

**Behavioral and Social Science Research:** Relevant research and best practices from diverse social science disciplines and professional fields will contribute to understanding of empirically-based practice.
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Reading List

Core Concepts


Pratt Center for Community Development CDC Oral History Project Studies http://www.prattcenter.net/cdcoralhistory.php


Steps in the Process


**Entering the Community**

Henderson & Thomas, Chapter 2.


**Getting to Know the Community**


Henderson & Thomas, Chapter 3, Appendix.


**Making Contacts and Bringing People Together**

Henderson & Thomas, Chapter 5.

Hope & Tisdale, Chapter 5.


**Building Organizational Capacity**

Henderson & Thomas, Chapter 6


**Making Action Plans**

Henderson & Thomas, Chapter 7.

Hope & Tisdale, Chapter 7.


**Building Constituency Support**


**Increasing Intergroup Dialogue**


**Youth Participation in Neighborhood Development**


Assignments

The assignments for the course include memoranda based on the readings and proposal for a community development initiative.

Memoranda

Write a series of memoranda which enable you to critically analyze and refer to the readings, organize your thoughts, and come to class prepared to discuss your approach. Each memorandum should be no more than two typewritten pages, and is due on the dates indicated below.

The first memorandum should address: What is your definition of community development? What criteria would you use to assess it, and why? (Due May 15, 10 percent)

The second memorandum should discuss: What are the key factors which facilitate successful community development. (Due May 22, 10 percent)

The third memorandum should compare various versions of community development, and formulate an approach of your own. Specifically, what are the “steps in the process” described by Henderson and Thomas, Jones, Bopp and Bopp, and World Vision. What are the steps in your own approach, and why? (Due June 5, 10 percent)

For the fourth memorandum, form a learning group around a method of community assessment, e.g., interviews, focus groups, asset mapping. Write a group memorandum which refers to relevant readings and addresses: What is the method? What are its features? What are its strengths and weaknesses? What is its potential for the class project? Come to class prepared to teach others about its practice. (Due June 19, 10 percent)

Proposal

Working in learning groups, prepare a 5-page proposal for a community development initiative in a specific neighborhood, and make a 10-minute presentation to class members and community leaders. (Due July 24, 40 percent)
**Portfolio**

Prepare a final portfolio of your semester’s work, including all assignments and a brief reflexive summary of your experience in the course. (Due July 26)

**On-Line Resources**

There are various on-line resources relevant for your work in the course, including Comm-Org and Community Tool Box.

**Paper Revision Policy**

You may revise and resubmit any paper for reevaluation until the last session of the seminar. Papers are due on assigned dates unless prearranged with the instructor. Late papers will be penalized.

**Class Participation**

Class participation contributes to individual and group learning. It might include involvement in discussions, volunteering, cocurricular activities, group leadership, or other initiatives. (20 percent)

Participation requires presence in class and submission of assignments on scheduled dates unless arranged in advance. Absence from class may result in lowering of your grade.
Pastor Harry Grayson of Messias Temple Church in Ypsilanti has asked us to conduct a class project that will gather information and formulate an approach for a community development initiative in a neighborhood area, and present findings and recommendations to community leaders.

Overall, he wants to develop a vision and plan that will promote participation, build capacity, and strengthen development in an area served by the Ypsilanti Community Non-Profit Housing Corporation, bounded approximately by Congress Street, Michigan Avenue, Chidester Street, I-94, and South Hewitt Road.

Pastor Grayson has asked the following questions:

1. What do people inside and outside the area perceive as its assets and needs?

2. What kind of community development initiative would people most likely support in the area? What would you recommend?

3. What are some approaches to community development as a process that might accomplish this purpose? What are the steps in the process?

4. What are the key elements for successful community development? What are the factors that facilitate and limit work of this type?

Pastor Grayson is asking us to gather information and formulate ideas for consideration. He hopes that we will “look, listen, and learn” as a preliminary step on which to build a potential long-term initiative. The assignment is not to formulate plans or create change, but to gather information and formulate ideas for an initiative which they might undertake. He expects us to make a presentation to him and other community leaders at the end of the semester.
Because of the preliminary sensitive stage, he asks that we communicate and coordinate through me before entering the neighborhood. It might jeopardize the project if we were to make contact without checking with him first.

Pastor Grayson is interested in gathering information about assets and needs, groups and agencies, community leadership, perceptions of people inside and outside the area, etc. Assessment methods might include observations, documents, interviews, focus groups, asset mapping, and a session with young people.

Pastor Grayson is joined by colleagues who share his commitment. They have been impressed by World Vision’s approach to transformational development, which places emphasis on youth development and youth participation.

Proposals should include the following:

- Project name – name or title of the project
- Purpose statement – a one sentence description of what will be accomplished as a result of the initiative
- Project overview – a one-paragraph summary of the project
- Project goals – impacts to be accomplished
- Project objectives – key elements necessary for success
- Rationale – why the project is important and the approach is appropriate
- Project steps – steps that will accomplish the objectives
- Elements for successful community development
- Indicators for measuring success
- Your own methodology – what you did to come up with the proposal
- Realistic timeline

The proposal should utilize and refer to specific course readings and class discussions. The presentation should include a visual that illustrates the proposal.
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Name:
Address:
Telephone:  e-mail:
UM program:
Professional goal:

Childhood community:

Ancestral community:

Community experience:

Interest in course topic:

Something about you that might be useful to the class:

Group whose participation I care about:

Characteristic of the group:

Perfect day:
Do you have a car available for driving to the neighborhood?

Yes____  No____

In the event that additional scheduling is required, can you meet on the following:

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