SW/UP 654        Barry Checkoway
Concepts and Techniques of     Fall 2002
Community Participation

Course Description

This course examines concepts and techniques of involving people in the decisions and institutions that affect their lives. It analyzes the changing context of participation, major models and methods of practice, and practical techniques to involve people in organizations and communities. It assesses the causes and effects of participation at multiple levels, and its potential for empowerment in democratic societies which value diversity as an asset. Emphasis is placed on promoting participation of socially and economically disadvantaged communities, women, young people, and other groups.

Course Objectives

1. Understand the changing context of community participation;
2. Analyze major models and methods of practice;
3. Demonstrate knowledge of skills to formulate participation strategy, conduct participatory assessment, design participatory plans, build community support, and promote intercultural participation;
4. Develop in-depth knowledge of organized efforts at participation;
5. Identify problems and issues of socially and economically disadvantaged groups in culturally diverse communities; and
6. Recognizes issues of ethics and values arising in the field.

Course Responsibilities

Responsibilities include readings, participation in discussions, written assignments, and individual and group exercises related to course materials. Assignments are due on scheduled dates unless arranged in advance. Guest speakers may be invited to address special topics.
Course Assignments

First Assignment

Write a short paper in which you critically discuss a theme from one or more readings for three of the first five six sessions of the semester. (10 percent each)

Each paper should be 2-3 double-spaced typewritten pages and is due at the session in which the readings will be discussed.

The first paper should critically discuss Seeds of Hope as an example of community participation.

Part of the assignment is concerned with your ability to use readings, organize your thoughts, and make a specific point.

Second Assignment

Assess an effort to strengthen community participation in terms of the extent to which it involves a group of your choosing. Describe the participation effort and group, assess the scope and quality of their participation, summarize your own methodology, and draw general conclusions. 5-7 pages due October 24. (25 percent)

Third Assignment

Propose a strategy to strengthen community participation of a group of your choice. Describe the group, propose and justify the strategy, summarize your own methodology, and assess some of the issues which might arise in implementation. Assume that few financial resources are available, but that other non-monetary support may be mobilized. 5-7 pages due November 21. (25 percent)

Final Exercise

This take-home exercise will involve one or more questions which allow you to synthesize what you have learned. This exercise will be concerned with your ability to use and refer to specific course readings, organize your knowledge, and present this in a concise manner. The exercise will be due 24 hours after its availability on December 5. (10 percent)
Class Participation

Class participation is instrumental for individual and collective learning in the course. (10 percent)

Combined Option

Instead of the second and third assignments, you may choose to prepare a single term paper in which you assess an effort to strengthen community participation, and propose a strategy to strengthen participation of a group of your choice. Consider the same elements as in the second and third assignments above. 12-15 pages due November 21. (50 percent)

Paper Revision

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


Mass Mobilization


Municipal Participation


**Neighborhood Development**


**Defining Community**


**Participatory Assessment**

Henderson and Thomas, Chapter 3.

**Designing the Process**

Getting Organized

Hardcastle, Chapter 9.
Henderson and Thomas, Chapter 6.

Building Support


Participatory Evaluation


Participation with Special Populations


Intercultural Participation


**Making Democracy Work**


**Ethical Issues**

Minkler, M., & Pies, C. Ethical issues in community organization and community participation. In Minkler, Chapter 8.