

PSYCHOLOGY 3850—COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

SPRING 2016

Instructor: Dr Jennifer Mather

Office Hours: Th 1400-1500 or by appointment

Office: C 888

Class Times: L 1108 Th 12:15- 1:30 (This room is inside the Teaching Centre)

Email: mather@uleth.ca

The purpose of this class is to introduce you to Community Psychology and help you discover how psychological principles are carried out within the community setting. It is delivered in cooperation with the Applied Studies office and contains a large component of work (volunteer or paid) within a particular community setting (7-8 hours per week). The Applied Studies office will receive monthly reports and conduct an on-site visit before the end of the semester (10% monthly reports and 20% employer evaluation for a total of 30% of the final grade). Dr. Mather will preside over weekly meetings of the group, discuss the principles of Community Psychology and evaluate written and oral assignments (70% of the grade). The theoretical basis of Community Psychology consists of two broad areas. One is how individuals see themselves as members of (more than one) community and how they fit into the larger context of a community. The second is how a community views and reacts to members, particularly minorities or those who don't 'fit in' to its definition of itself. But Community Psychology has a large practical component, focusing also on the betterment of the community and the individuals within it.

The major **objectives of the course** are:

- 1) To provide practical settings outside the classroom where theory and practice can complement one another.
- 2) To introduce you to the ideas and practices of Community Psychology.
- 3) To give you practice in oral presentation, paper writing and keeping a reflective journal.

Course Format in Detail:

Oral Presentation: Each class member will present the agency in which s/he is involved and his/her role in it, for one 75-minute class time. Areas covered might be: description of the agency, purpose of the agency, your role in the day-to-day working of the agency, your interactions with clients, how the agency fits within the mosaic of social services, the social, financial and organizational structure of the agency. The presentation schedule will be worked out in the first class meeting.

Written Paper: Each student will choose a topic and write a paper (APA Format, 20+ text pages, minimum 15 references) on some topic that is relevant to the functioning of the agency in which s/he is working or the clients who are served. Students will choose a topic for the approval of Dr Mather, write an outline due February 11th, first draft due March 10th and final draft, due April 25th.

Reflective Journal: Each student will keep a Reflective Journal as s/he moves through the semester. Some of the Journal will reflect the interactions at the agency. What is your role? How effective were you? Did your interaction assist the clients? What did you discover about the clients, and about yourself? Do the agency's formal aims match its day-to-day implementation? How has this experience helped shape your future aims? Other Journal entries will come from the class experience. What is Community Psychology? How do the agencies that class members work at fit within the community? How do you and the community at large view them? What are the values of and problems for not-for-profit agencies? How do practical and academic experiences mesh and complement one another? At least one scholarly reference per entry will be expected, if some entries are not appropriate to references, provide more for others that are. Journals will be collected for informal evaluation and feedback halfway through the semester, and due at the same time as the final draft of the paper, April 25th. A self-evaluation will be the final Journal entry.

The grade value of these three components of the academic 70% of the course will be decided by class discussion at the first class meeting.

Monthly Reports (10% overall): Submitted to Applied Studies Coordinator. The monthly report guidelines are as follows:

- 2-5 pages in length
- Summary of hours completed
- Reflection on progression of Learning Objectives
- Demonstrates analysis of skill development (provide examples)
- Makes connections between academic training and practical experience (demonstrate with examples)
- Reports should be edited for appropriate grammar and spelling

Grade Distribution: The A range will begin at 85%, the B range at 75% and the C one at 65%.