

SYLLABUS
Sociology 240 – Community: People and Places
2:00 – 2:50pm
Spring Semester 2003

Joan M. Brehm
Schroeder Hall, rm. 342-D

e-mail: jmbrehm@ilstu.edu
Phone: 438-7177

Office Hours:

Monday 12:00pm – 1:30pm and Wednesday 11:00am – 1:00pm; and by appointment

Graduate Teaching Assistant:

Audrey Goudreau, aagoudr@ilstu.edu

Undergraduate Teaching Assistants:

Kristen Knapp klknapp@ilstu.edu, Julia Hanlon, jh1324@aol.com
Kelly Crane, skully3@hotmail.com

Required Text:

Putnam, Robert D. *“Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community”*. Simon and Schuster.

Wilkinson, Kenneth P. *“The Community in Rural America”*. Social Ecology Press.

Dreier, Peter, John Mollenkopf, and Todd Swanstrom. *“Place Matters: Metropolitcs for the Twenty-First Century”*. University of Kansas Press.

In addition, a small supplementary reading packet is required and available for purchase at Rapid Print in the basement of the Old Union Building.

Course Description: This course addresses issues pertaining to what one writer has described as one of “the most fundamental and far-reaching of sociology’s unit ideas” – the concept of community. Unlike many other courses, this course focuses on something that we all share in common, at least at a very fundamental level, that of a “community” in shaping who you have become. Beyond this basic commonality, there are numerous differences in how we both define and experience community. Although there are abundant assertions within sociology about the importance of community as a social phenomenon and a topic of inquiry, the field is characterized by profound uncertainties and disagreements about the key attributes which define “the community,” the contexts in which communal relations may be expected to emerge, and the relationships between community processes and broader patterns of social change. There is also considerable debate about the degree to which the notion of community remains relevant in advanced industrial and highly technological societies. We are increasingly a very mobile society and rely heavily on technology to communicate and function in our daily lives. As a result, the “community question” remains largely unresolved and debated.

Course Objectives: In this course, we will critically examine many of the issues surrounding the questions of community. We will first address the social, political, economic and physical structures that form the foundation of community and examine how these may function to either enhance or detract from individual and social well-being within community. Rural and urban forms of community will be compared and contrasted in an attempt to understand more fully the social structures and social processes that collectively comprise “the community” as a sociological concept. You will be challenged to use a critical thinking approach to examine the concepts of community and to apply them to your own experiences and the experiences of others. This class will undoubtedly fail to resolve many of the questions and uncertainties that characterize community sociology. Rather, the intent is to confront those questions and uncertainties from several different angles in an attempt to better understand the nature of community as a sociological phenomenon.

Course Assignments:

Reading Reflection Journal: The course will involve completing all reading assignments from the texts BEFORE it is presented for discussion in class, to enable us to have a more informed interactive discussion rather than a straightforward lecture.

You will be required to keep a weekly journal that critically reflects on each weeks readings, based on several questions that I will provide. You MUST bring your written response to the questions EVERY Monday of class. These will be used for discussions and will be randomly collected five times during the semester for credit. Each reading reflection journal entry that is collected is worth 2% of your final grade for a total of 10%. **These CANNOT be made up unless there is a pre-arranged absence or a documented emergency.** If such situation exists you MUST speak to me within one week of such absence in order to be considered for the lost points.

Exams: There will be three exams throughout the semester, all of which count for a total of 45% of your final grade (15% each). Each of these three tests will concentrate on the material covered from the previous exam, both in the readings and in material presented and discussed in class. You are responsible for ALL the material presented and covered, both in readings and in lecture and discussion. Exams are **not cumulative**, meaning that exams will only cover the current material following the previous exam and up to the current exam.

In-Class Exercises: There will be numerous random in class exercises designed to get you involved in class discussions and experiences related to the sociological study of community. Five of these will be counted for points and will be worth a total of 10% of your final grade. **These CANNOT be made up unless there is a pre-arranged absence or a documented emergency.** If such situation exists you MUST speak to me within one week of such absence in order to be considered for the lost points. Attending class on a regular basis will only improve your overall comprehension of material and your grade.

Community Current Issue Report: You will be required to complete a 3-5 page written report on a current issue/problem facing a community of your choice. You may use local/national news sources or your own knowledge and experiences to identify the community and the issue you wish to focus on. The community can be your home town, a community in this particular area, or one that catches your attention in the news from another place in the nation. You will be required to research the current issue and apply the concepts from class to your explanation of the issue. You must use a critical thinking approach and *not simply summarize the information that you find*. More specific details for this assignment will follow in the first few weeks of the semester. The written report is worth 15% of your final grade.

Community Ethnography Book Report: You will be required to turn in an extensive (6-8 page) book report on a community ethnography that you must select from a list that is available in the RP instructor folder. In the paper you must describe the community under study in the ethnography using the content of this course (refer to readings, class notes, etc.). You must identify which social structures and/or processes are under study in the ethnography and why. The ethnography report is worth 20% of your final grade.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE DOWNGRADED ONE FULL GRADE FOR EVERY DAY THEY ARE LATE, UNLESS YOU HAVE MY PRE-ARRANGED APPROVAL FOR AN EXTENSION PRIOR TO THE DUE DATE – NO EXCEPTIONS!

Student Evaluation Overview:

I do not 'give' grades, you earn them based on your work. Your grade for the course will be based on the following evaluation methods:

Reading Reflection Journal (10%)	10 percent
Exams (3 @ 15% each)	45 percent
In-Class Exercises (10%)	10 percent
Community Current Issues Report (15%)	15 percent
Ethnographic Book Review (20%)	20 percent

Grading Scale:

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	59% and below

Classroom Policies:

Much of the material presented in this course and the views expressed by other students and the instructor will challenge your values and beliefs, since adopting a sociological perspective entails looking at the world from a different vantage point than you typically use. It is imperative that everyone be respectful of all ideas and the individuals and groups who state them. **Diverse ideas and views are important to the class, and all comments are encouraged and welcomed.** Please help ensure a comfortable and respectful environment for discussion. **Personal attacks or hostility are not acceptable and will not be tolerated.**

Disruptive behaviors (such as reading the newspaper in class or carrying on private conversations with your neighbor) are distracting and disrespectful. Final grades for borderline cases between two grades will be negatively influenced by these behaviors.

Late Arrivals: Arriving late for class is disruptive and disrespectful. *If you are more than 10 minutes late for class you will be required to come to the front of class and give a 10 minute presentation on the readings/topic for that week.*

No make-up exams will be provided unless arranged for at least two weeks in advance. All important exam dates are listed on the syllabus. Please make note of these dates and contact me with any conflicts as soon as possible. Exceptions will be granted in the case of unexpected illness or emergencies. Please notify me as soon as reasonable in this situation and arrangements will be made. Events such as family reunions, vacations, Spring Break etc. are NOT acceptable reasons for make-up exams.

Academic integrity is required for all students. Cheating, plagiarism, or other academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and is a violation of University policy. Any such acts will be promptly reported to the appropriate University officials for further action. For a full explanation of the student code of conduct and an explanation of academic integrity please visit the website of Student Dispute Resolution Services http://www.sdrs.ilstu.edu/Student_Conduct.shtml.

No “live” cell-phones, pagers, etc. are permitted without prior permission from the instructor. If you have a special need, please see me to make me aware of the situation as soon as possible.

Availability of Instructor – It is MY responsibility to assist you in grasping the material and concepts that are presented in the course. However, it is YOUR responsibility to seek out assistance when you are having difficulty. Do not wait until the end of the semester when it is too late. I encourage you to use my office hours or to contact me to arrange a time if the established hours conflict with your schedule. I am more than willing to arrange a time that works for both of us. The best way to reach me is via e-mail. **PLEASE NOTE: I WILL ONLY ACCEPT MAIL FROM AND SEND MAIL TO YOUR ULID ACCOUNT.** *Finally, you must allow me 24 hours to respond to your message.* If you send me a message on Friday afternoon or over the weekend, I will not respond until Monday as I am often out of the technology loop during the weekends.

Grades Availability – As a result of FERPA protection, no grades are given over the phone or through e-mail. You are responsible for maintaining an accurate record of your grades throughout the semester. No grades will be given out during final examination week. Therefore, any grade checks will have to be taken care of prior to this time. If the technology gods are looking upon me with favor, I should have a WebCT course website up shortly after the first week of class that will enable you to check your current grade at any point in time for yourself so you can track your own progress. Details of how to access this will be forthcoming.

Special Needs: Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability should contact Disability Concerns at 350 Fell Hall, 438-5853 (voice), 438-8620 (TDD).

Tentative Course Schedule

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading/ Assignments</u>
Jan. 12-16	Course Introduction Critical Thinking 101 Beginnings of Community Research	<i>“The Metropolis and Mental Life” Simmel (RP)</i>
Jan 21-23 (NO CLASS MON. JAN. 19, MLK DAY) Bring journal reflections on Wednesday, Jan. 21	Defining Community	<i>Warren chpt. 2 (RP)</i> <i>“Cyberhood vs. Neighborhood”, Barlow and Rheingold (RP)</i>
Jan. 26-30	Defining Community : an Interactional Approach	Wilkinson chpt. 1 & 2
Feb. 2-6	Social Capital	Putnam chpts. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Feb. 9-11	Social Capital cont.	Putnam chpts. 6, 7, 8, 9
<i>Feb. 12: EXAM #1</i>		<i>EXAM #1</i>
Feb. 16-20	Changing Human Factors in Community	Putnam chpts. 10,11,12

Feb. 23-27	Impacts of Changing Human Factors	Putnam chpts. 13, 15, 16,17
March 1-5	Impacts of Changing Human Factors Cont.	Putnam chpts. 19, 21, 22
March 8-12 NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK		
March 15-19	Human and Political Capital	<i>Flora and Flora chpts. 4, 5 (RP)</i>
March 22-26 MARCH 22 – COMMUNITUY ISSUE PAPER DUE	Natural and Financial Capital -	<i>Flora and Flora chpts. 6, 7 (RP)</i>
March 29, Exam #2		EXAM #2
March 31-April 2	Politics and Government	Drier et al. chpt. 1
April 5-9	Community Inequality and Urban Politics	Drier et al chpts. 2, 3
April 12-16 APRIL 12 – ETHNOGRAPHY BOOK REVIEW DUE	Putting it All Together – Community Well-Being and Community Development	Wilkinson Chpt. 3, 4
April 19-23	What Next? Affecting Community Change and Development	Drier et al chpts. 5, 7, 8
April 26-30	What Next? Affecting Community Change and Development	<i>“Planning for Space: Saving Farmland and Building Community in Colorado’s Yampa Valley” Williams, F. (RP)</i> <i>“Strong Foundations: Can the Beacons Project Save Montana’s Small Towns?” Snow, D. (RP)</i> <i>Additional readings to be announced.</i>
FINAL EXAM – TUESDAY, MAY 4, 1:00pm		

--	--	--