Overview: This course is designed to provide students with a structured overview of community organization. The course will include readings on defining and characterizing community; power and leadership dynamics in community; economic and class issues; determinants of health that relate to community; community assessments; and approaches and tools to use when actually conducting and evaluating community-organizing initiatives.

A major challenge associated with offering a course addressing community organization is the range of material needing to be covered. Community organization is an interest of social workers, sociologists, organization theorists, political scientists, epidemiologists, and psychologists, to name but a few disciplines contributing to our knowledge of working with communities.

What to expect: This class will enable students to make a careful study of the broad range of issues involved in community organization. The time in class will emphasize discussions and sharing of ideas, insights and questions about community organization. The context and emphasis will be on health but we will draw on case studies, readings, and speakers from a variety of fields and settings.

Students will be assigned readings in advance of each class, and students will have an opportunity to develop leadership skills by taking responsibility for presenting information to the class and leading discussions.

Objectives: Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:
1. Identify basic characteristics of community-organizing approaches to addressing social and health problems;
2. Define the concept(s) of community;
3. Compare and contrast different theories and models relevant to community organization;
4. Analyze organizations that apply community-organizing approaches;
5. Discuss principles for evaluating and doing research on community-organizing initiatives;
6. Discuss the roles of social workers and other professionals in community organization and their ethical implications; and,
7. Analyze and report a field experience on a class project that is related to community organization.

Approach: This course will generally follow a seminar format. It will include group discussions, instructor and guest presentations, in-class discussions and exercises, students’ presentations, and field experience. Students are expected to learn the skills that will
help further their thinking and practice. The role of the instructor is to assist students in this process by acting as a facilitator and as a resource.

Requirements:

1. Class participation and attendance are considered in evaluating grades. Students are expected to notify the class instructor if they are unable to attend class for any reason.

2. Midterm and final exams – Students will complete two exams. These exams will provide students the opportunity to synthesize material presented across sessions.

3. Presentation and critique of an empirical article – Students will develop a presentation and facilitate discussion of one article (i.e., an article of interest to you which are not included in the required readings). This assignment will provide you the opportunity to explore a sub-topic within the field of community organization that is of special interest to you. It will also help develop your group facilitation and presentation skills.

4. Conduct and present one case study – Students will gather information from documents and interviews to provide a presentation on a group or organization which applies, in some way, community-organizing strategies. The purpose of the case study is to provide a real-life context for class assignments. This project should serve as a framework within which students do the readings, listen to presenters, and prepare assignments.

5. Conduct and present one class project – Students will review literature and gather data on a question of interest that is related in some way to community organization. This project should serve to strengthen students’ research and analytic skills, as well as provide a context for class assignments, discussions, and lectures.

Grading: Students will be evaluated on performance on the following: (a) class participation and attendance (10%); (b) two exams (20% each, for a total of 40% of final grade); (c) class presentation of your critique of an empirical article (10%); (d) a case study of a group or organization which applies community-organizing strategies (20%); and, (e) class project that is related to community organization (20%). Grades will be letter grades, following University procedures.
Plagiarism

All work submitted in a graduate course must be your own. It is unethical and a violation of the University’s Academic Integrity Policy to present the ideas or words of another without clearly and fully identifying the source. Inadequate citations will be constructed as an attempt to misrepresent the cited materials as your own. Use the citation style preferred by the discipline.

Effective September 2, 2008, a revised Policy on Academic Integrity will go into effect. The new policy is posted at http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml.

Please Note: Violations of academic integrity by graduate and professional students will normally be penalized more severely than violations by first-year undergraduate students. Since all violations of academic integrity by a graduate or professional student are potentially separable under the Academic Integrity Policy, faculty members should not adjudicate alleged academic integrity violations by graduate and professional students, but should refer such allegations to the appropriate Academic Integrity Facilitator (AIF) or to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. The AIF that you should contact is Antoinette Y. Farmer, 732.932.2621. The student shall be notified in writing, by email or hand delivery, of the alleged violation and of the fact that the matter has been referred to the AIF for adjudication. This notification shall be done within 10 days of identifying the alleged violation. Once the student has been notified of the allegation, the student may not drop the course or withdraw from the school until the adjudication process is complete. A TZ or incomplete grade, shall be assigned until the case is resolved.

Definition of Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in a footnote. Acknowledgment is required when material from another source is stored in print, electronic, or other medium and is paraphrased or summarized in whole or part in one’s own words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: to paraphrase Plato’s comment...and conclude with a footnote identifying the exact reference. A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information which is common knowledge, such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc., need not to be footnoted; however, all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged. In addition to materials specifically cited in the text, only materials that contribute to one’s general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography. Plagiarism can, in some case, be a subtle issue. Any question about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the faculty member.

Disability Accommodation

Please Note: Any student who believes that s/he may need an accommodation in this class due to a disability should contact the Office of Disability Services, Kreeger Learning Center, 151 College Avenue; doffice@rci.rutgers.edu; 732-932-2847. Students must have a letter of accommodation from the Office of Disability Services in order to receive accommodations.
Schedule: Weeks 1 (Jan 24) and 2 (Jan 31)
Introduction to basic concepts and foundations of community organization

Readings for Week 2:

Week 3 (Feb 7)
Environmental determinants of social and health problems

Readings for Week 3

Weeks 4 (Feb 14) & 5 (Feb 21)
Theoretical frameworks and constructs for community organization

Readings for Week 4:


**Readings for Week 5:**


* Week 5 – Group 1 will present article critique *

**Weeks 6 (Feb 28) and 7 (Mar 6)**

Community organization processes and the role of professionals

**Readings for Week 6:**


* Week 6 – Group 2 will present article critique *
Readings for Week 7


* Week 7 – Group 3 will present article critique *

Week 8 (Mar 13) – Exam I

* No readings for Week 8 *

Week 9 (Mar 20) – Spring Break

* No additional readings for Week 9 *

Week 10 (Mar 27) – Case Studies Due

* All groups will present case studies *

* No additional readings for Week 10 *

Weeks 11 (Apr 3), 12 (Apr 10), 13 (Apr 17) & 14 (Apr 24)
Strategies and tactics in community organization

Readings for Week 11


* Week 11 – Group 4 will present article critique *
Readings for Week 12

* Week 12 – Group 5 will present article critique *

Readings for Week 13

Readings for Week 14

Week 15 (May 1) – Class Projects Due

* All groups will present class projects *

Week 16 (May 8) – Exam II

* No additional readings for Week 16 *