

SOCIOLOGY P573 GRADUATE SEMINAR ON SOCIOLOGICAL PRACTICE AND THE COMMUNITY

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T 6:00 – 8:45 pm

What this course is about

The concept of “community” has played — and indeed continues to play — an important role in American society and popular consciousness. The concept is a *normative* one in that it tends to embody a remembered ideal from the past, a critical evaluation of the present, and a prescription for the future. The direct democracy of the New England town meeting and the cooperative solidarity and support of frontier homesteaders (quilting bees, barnraisings, etc.) and the turn-of-the-century urban immigrant neighborhood are vital components of America’s collective cultural memory. Major social movements (e.g., populism, union organizing, temperance, civil rights, feminism, environmentalism) have essentially been community-based and have sounded communitarian themes. Moreover, America has a strong tradition of utopian community movements and community-based religious revivalism — e.g., the Shakers, the Oneida Community, New Harmony, 1970s back-to-the-landers, Old Order Amish, the Mormons, Father Divine movement. And today in America the fastest-growing residential locations are smaller cities and towns, where the quality of life is perceived to be better.

Clearly, Americans believe in community. At the same time, however, there can be no doubt that America, more than any other society in history, has sanctified the principle of individualism, both in theory and in practice. There is perhaps no other civic norm held more dearly by Americans than individual liberty and freedom of choice. So there is a built-in tension in this society between individualism and community. This tension, not surprisingly, is reflected in the academic discipline of sociology. To a person, the founders of sociology (Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Simmel, Spencer, Martineau) formulated their major theories in the context of grappling with the relationship between the individual and society. Not surprisingly, every one of these theorists saw particular promise in American society. It is this promise of positive interaction between individualism and community that we will explore in this course.

The focus of this course is both theoretical and applied. On the one hand, we want to explore the assumptions and principles of community and community development. At the same time, we want to develop insights about how urban structure has shaped community. We also want to explore policies and programs that will allow us to more effectively organize communities where we find ourselves. Finally, in this course we shall strive to “practice what we preach.” That is, we will attempt to realize the benefits of joint social action by building a sense of community among the members of this class. On the one hand, this means that class participation will be important; on the other hand it means that a major part of our efforts this term will be devoted to group discussion and presentation. Because this is a graduate course, students will be expected to analyze, synthesize, and appropriately apply research findings and to discuss the material articulately in class.

Course materials you will need

Required assigned readings will be drawn from the following sources which are available at the campus bookstore:

- Carolyn R. Shaffer & Kristin Anundsen, *Creating Community Anywhere: Finding Support and Connection in a Fragmented World*. Jeremy P. Tarcher, 1993.
- Mike Greenberg, *The Poetics of Cities: Designing Neighborhoods That Work*. Ohio State University Press, 1995.
- Douglas Schuler, *New Community Networks: Wired for Change*. Addison-Wesley, 1996.
- Paul Mattessich and Barbara Monsey, *Community Building: What Makes It Work: A Review of Factors Influencing Successful Community Building*. Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 1997.

What you'll be expected to do

1. Do the assigned readings.

I expect you to read all of the assigned material *before* the topic is covered in class and to come to class prepared to discuss it. Class time will be used to extend and supplement material in the readings and to clarify and discuss it in greater depth. All of these tasks require you to have read the material prior to discussing it. To a large extent, it is up to you, as part of your active learning process, to make the connections between the readings and lecture material, or to ask questions if you don't.

2. Come to class and participate in the discussion.

This course will be organized on a participatory basis, as it is my view that this material can be most effectively learned through intellectual dialogue and active learning. As noted above, we will be attempting to create our own community in the classroom. First of all, this requires you to be present at all class sessions. In order to hold each individual accountable, attendance will be taken. More than just being present, however, you are expected and encouraged to actively participate in each class session. Participation includes raising questions as well as points of clarification or debate and sharing personal insights and experiences. As the term goes on, I expect each graduate student to increasingly participate in shaping the course to meet your own needs.

In order to encourage your active involvement and to build the presentation skills necessary for graduate students, each graduate student will be assigned to present findings from the Mattessich and Monsey that are relevant to the topics under discussion in the course at that time. I don't expect you to lecture, but I do expect you supplement the class discussion by synthesizing the material and presenting it coherently to the class. I will be available to consult with you about these presentations.

3. Write the assigned papers.

You will be assigned to write three papers of approximately 9-10 pages each. You will be expected to incorporate the relevant research from Mattessich and Monsey into each paper. Specific guidelines for each paper will be handed out separately. **Each paper must be**

typed or computer-printed. Papers should *not* be placed in any kind of paper or plastic folder or covering and should be stapled in the upper left corner only. While you are encouraged to collaborate in studying the material, each student will write and turn in their own individual papers. One paper will involve a driving tour of Fort Wayne which you will be expected to complete outside of class. You may do this tour in a group, but you must write your own individual paper. The papers will be due according to the following schedule:

<u>Paper #</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Due</u>
1	Characteristics of community	February 15
2	Urban design and community	March 28
3	Building community	May 4

How you'll be evaluated

The elements of evaluation in this course will be weighted in the following manner:

Class Participation	15% of final course grade
Class Presentation	10% of final course grade
Papers — 3 @ 25% each	<u>75%</u> of final course grade
	100%

Final grades for the course will be assigned according to the following scale:

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

There will be no curve.

What I will do

- Take responsibility for organizing the syllabus and the general design of the course.**

I've had the time and training to think about this topic, so it's appropriate that I take the lead. This doesn't absolve you, however, from increasing responsibility as the term goes on.

- Take responsibility for ensuring a safe, productive, and fun learning environment.**

Classes that involve a lot of participation can be anxiety-provoking for many students. Will someone (me?) say something embarrassing or confrontational? Will conflict occur? What happens if the class gets off on some unproductive tangent? What if I don't find other students' contributions useful or educational? These are all concerns for which I, as instructor, take ultimate responsibility. Along the way, however, I hope that you will learn some productive techniques for learning and interpersonal interaction. And why shouldn't learning be fun, at least part of the time?

- Be enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and organized.**

Within reason, of course.

- Be available as a consultant for any course-related issues.**

Schedule an appointment, stop by, e-mail or call me. I want to help you to develop the skills and knowledge appropriate to graduate-level students.

- Accommodate any disability, if at all possible.**

If you have or acquire any sort of disability that may require accommodation, I urge you to discuss it with me (preferably after class or during office hours). I want to do everything that I can to help everyone who wants to succeed in this course. If you want to find out what special services and accommodations are available on campus, you are encouraged to contact Services for Students with Disabilities in Walb 118 & 218 (481-6657, voice/TDD). <http://www.ipfw.edu/ssd/>

How to contact me

If you have any questions or concerns about the subject matter or your performance in this course, I urge you to contact me (sooner is better than later, but anytime is better than no time). One of the easiest ways to communicate with me is through electronic mail; my e-mail address is listed below. Every IPFW student has been assigned a personal account through which you may access the Internet and the World Wide Web. If you've misplaced the information on how to activate your account, contact the **Help Desk in 205A Kettler**. You can also leave a voice-mail message on my office telephone if I'm not there. For a question or an issue that just can't wait, or in an emergency, call me at home and leave a message on the machine if I'm not there.

My office: CM 235 **Phone:** 481-6669 **Home phone:** 485-6314

Sociology Office: CM 241 **Phone:** 481-6842 **Fax:** 481-6985

Internet: ashton@ipfw.edu

Webpage: www.users.ipfw.edu/ashton/

Office hours: TR 12:00 noon – 1:30 pm, or by appointment

Topic outline and reading assignments

Note: Reading assignments from the Mattessich and Monsey book will be made separately during the term.

<u>Week</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Reading Assignment and Class Topic</u>
1	Jan 11	Philosophy, Overview, & Organization of the Course / Personal Goals Reading: Shaffer and Anundson, Chapter 1
	Jan 13	Introductions / The Experience of Community
2		Reading: Shaffer and Anundson, Chapters 2 and 3

- Jan 18 What is Community?
Jan 20 Benefits of Community
- 3** **Reading:** Shaffer and Anundson, Chapters 4, 5, and 6
Jan 25 Types of Community
Jan 27 Community and Diversity
- 4** **Reading:** Schuler, Chapter 1, pp. 1-22
 Shaffer and Anundson, Chapters 12 and 13
Feb 1 Principles of Community Organization
Feb 3 Phases of Community
- 5** **Reading:** Greenberg, Chapters 1, 2, and 3
Feb 8 Place and Space
Feb 10 City Lives
- 6** **Reading:** Greenberg, Chapters 4 and 5
Feb 15 City Form
Feb 17 The Dance of the Streets
- 7** **Reading:** Greenberg, Chapters 6 and 7
Feb 22 Neighborhood Community
Feb 24 Neighborhood Design
- 8** **Reading:** Greenberg, Chapters 8 and 9
Feb 29 Commerce and Community
March 2 Barriers to Community
- March 7, 9 NO CLASS MEETING — SPRING Break*
- 9** **Reading:** Greenberg, Chapters 10, 11, and Appendix
March 14 Politics and Poetics
March 16 Creating an Urban Matrix
- March 17 Last day to withdraw from courses*
- 10** **Reading:** Schuler, Chapter 1, pp. 22-34, Chapter 2

