SPSW 2002 - Working With Communities
Semester: 2
Year: 2007

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Unit Weighting
Teaching Methods

10
Tutorial
Problem Based Learning

Brief Course Description
This course provides students with a range of skills in community work, community development and capacity building. Community work takes place both in neighbourhoods and with communities of interest such as ethnic, Aboriginal, gender-based, youth or aged communities. Central to this empowerment approach is the notion that people with common experiences, issues or problems, can gain control over their lives through collective action. The subject is experience-based and involves fieldwork and analysis of existing community programs and projects.

Contact Hours
3 hours per week

Course Objectives
Students will:
1. Critically examine the theory and practice of community development as an approach to social issues and social problems.
2. Develop a critical understanding of the philosophy, policies and practice based on concepts of community care.
3. Develop knowledge and skills in the identification of community needs associated with social issues.
4. Develop a critical understanding of community consultation and participation structures and practices.
5. Apply learning to specific scenarios.

Course Content
- Critical analysis of the concept of “Community”
- Concept of ‘Social Capital’
- Ethics, Values, Anti-Oppressive and Emancipatory Practice
- Theories and Models of Community Development
- Community Practice Skills Development
- Community Consultation and Participation
- Capacity Building and Strengths-Based Practice
- Needs Assessment and Service Planning
- Urban: Community Enhancement Approaches
- Community care - philosophy and practice
- Rights and Citizenship and Social policy
- Policy Developments, Dilemmas and Contradictions

General introductory Overview.

SPSW2002 explores community development approaches to challenging and confronting dominant discourses and approaches to “social issues” and “community problems”. Community development is an approach based on the notion that people with common experiences, issues or problems can gain some control over their lives through collective action.

Community development is thus about a process that seeks to establish supportive communities where people identify and endeavour to meet their needs through participatory activities and through the sharing and development of resources, social interaction, dialogue and mutual support.

Ife (1995) describes community development in a number of ways and within different contexts. Two examples are:

“... Community development represents a vision of how things might be organised differently, so that genuine ecological sustainability and social justice, which seem unachievable at global and national levels, can be realised in the experience of human community... ” (p xi).

“... community development is not about defining and
establishing something called community, but rather an ongoing and complex process of dialogue, exchange, consciousness raising, education and action aimed at helping the people concerned to determine and develop their own version of community...” (p.93-94).

This course is experience-based and relies on student participation and active involvement in the exploration of theoretical ideas as applied to practical scenarios through group tasks and experiential learning activities. Indeed, it is important to note that the central principles of collaboration, and participatory action, so central to contemporary community work, are mirrored in the approach to learning through active and cooperative inquiry fostered in this curriculum and the classroom experiences offered throughout the SPSW2002 program.

The framework underpinning this learning unit draws on the vexed and complex area of community-based social concerns and the competing perspectives of “community troubles”(*various examples will be critically examined and discussed). The focus is on developing a community development conceptualisation and strategy that is informed by, and addresses, the “social construction” of a social problem. This objective is engaged through an interrogation of the structural and individual processes that underpin the “production and (re)production” of “social concerns”.

Moving beyond traditional individual approaches to social intervention within this course we begin to explore and develop conceptual tools and practical strategies to affect the course of social change (A shift which focuses on more Mezzo & Macro levels of theory and practice). Specifically this involves two key processes: Analyzing social situations and forming collaborative relationships with different groups to bring about some desirable change. This process and shift in emphasis has three main aims: the first is the democratic process of actively involving people in thinking, deciding, planning, and playing a proactive part in the change process and in the development and operation of services that affect their daily lives; the second relates to the value for personal fulfillment of belonging to a community; the third is concerned with the need in community planning to think of actual people in relation to other people and the satisfaction of their needs as persons, rather than to focus attention upon a series of separate needs and problems.

This process is not without obstacles and political/social and wider structural constraints and contests centering on power and control. Indeed, this process as outlined involves working with constant tensions between people’s needs and the scarce resources available to meet them (Particularly in these contemporary times of Neo-liberal retreat from the Welfare State), between the conflicting demands of different groups, and the different ideas and about the kind of change that is desirable. Political imperatives and ideological stances, organizational structures and administration, are also important dynamics and forces in impeding or facilitating these processes.

**Community Strengthening**

Community strengthening has emerged as a key policy theme as governments around the world seek ways of addressing increasingly complex issues facing contemporary society. It is a process whereby communities, government, business and philanthropic organisations work together to achieve agreed social, economic and environmental outcomes.

It works by government **listening** to what local people **believe** could improve their community and **sharing ideas** about how these changes can be
Communities themselves are usually in the best position to develop ideas on how to improve their conditions.

Community strengthening helps to mobilise community skills, energy and resources and apply them in ways that achieve positive social change.

*Geographical - Communities can be based around where people live, such as neighbourhood, suburb or town.
*Interest - communities may be based around common interests, such as conservation, social justice or sporting interests.
*Identity - communities can also share a common identity such as age, culture or lifestyle.

What is important is that community members feel a sense of identity, belonging and connection - and a willingness to work together to achieve common goals.

Community strengthening aims to build collaborative relationships between individuals and groups to achieve common objectives. Community strengthening aims to cultivate these attributes at the community level to create stronger social institutions, improved well-being and increased social and economic opportunities—a philosophy and practice focused on facilitating/supporting communities to be active, confident and resilient.
Assessment Task 1.

SEMINAR PRESENTATION AND PEER TRAINING SESSION GRADE: 40%

Students working in small teams of will undertake to anchor one of the prescribed community work readings. *A book of Readings are available for purchase from NUSA services.*

After exploring key themes and arguments students are asked to devise a brief oral presentation and an interconnected workshop activity which engages fellow students in an exploration of key issues and community work skills- this is to be offered as a peer training session.

Problem-Based Practice Simulation Scenario:
*Students are to approach this task “as if” they have been asked by colleagues to provide an update professional skills session detailing contemporary thinking and practice debates concerning community work- theory & practice. For this task it might be useful to imagine that you have moved to a remote regional area as a “new graduate” and the local community workers have seized upon the opportunity to engage in some collaborative skills update, reflection and discussion. The challenge here is to synthesise the reading and devise an exercise/activity that engages the participants in meaningful intellectual activity, collective dialogue, and hopefully some measure of playful connection with the content, debates and each others differing perspectives.

*Students are required to submit their summary notes to support the peer training session.*

*Length min 2,000 words, double-spaced, 12 font. Due date one week after presentation.*

*Task 1. Represents 40% of Total marks for SPSW2002.*

Assessment Criteria (Task 1.):

- Demonstrated reading, synthesis of literature and referencing;
- Critical thinking and demonstration of argument grounded in the reading(s);
- Personal reflection and development of a personal political/ethical/culturally sensitive stance;
- Clarity and coherence of argument both orally within the seminar and in terms of the written communication within the summary paper;
- Engagement with the audience (Seminar) and the reader in terms of the written documentation;
- Creativity and problem-solving-in terms of the tutorial strategising ways and means of bringing the set reading material “alive”, and constructing experiential activities or focus questions for small group reflection;
- Organisation, structure and presentation of the final summary.
Assessment Task 2: this task has 2 components. First, there is a group research/problem-solving activity culminating in an informal feedback presentation to peers. Secondly, the insights generated in the group research are refined and synthesised into an individual discussion paper (2,500 word essay).

Task 2 challenges students to “imagine” that their team (a small group of community consultants) have been contracted to put forward a proposal for a Community Intervention which addresses and targets a critical concern or incident that has significantly impacted on a local community.

Possible hypothetical scenarios and actual contemporary case examples will be explored in workshops. This task provides students with an opportunity to examine methods of social assessment and needs analysis and opens up the political/ethical/cultural dilemmas encountered in community practice. Students are invited to consider a wide choice of possible options and explore, strategise, and construct differing proposals that address an authentic community concern.

This concluding individual task challenges students to undertake a critical analysis of the community development strategy promoted by the group, particularly in terms of identified general theoretical frameworks, broad practice principles, ethical, policy and practical issues. Further this task stimulates reflection on the group research task and in a significant way mirrors the reflexive cycle of reflection-evaluation-change which underpins day to day professional practice.

The individual discussion and research review paper (individual essay) should include:

- An overview and critique of the background rationale, and proposed community intervention strategy in terms of: Ife’s (1995) “principles of community development”; and, A community development theory or model selected by you.

Strengths and weaknesses of the community development strategy created in the group task- including: perceived dilemmas, contradictions and potential obstacles to effecting social change.

Reflection on your experiences during the group task, including the role you took in the group, what you did well, how you could improve the way you work in groups, and the dynamics of the group and how those interconnected forces assisted or inhibited the group process.

Assessment Criteria (Task 2.):

- Demonstrated reading, synthesis of literature and referencing;
- Critical thinking and demonstration of argument grounded in the readings;
- Personal reflection and development of a personal- political/ethical/and culturally sensitive stance;
- Clarity and coherence of argument;
- Organisation, structure and presentation of the final work.
Online Tutorial Registration:

Students are required to enrol in the Lecture and a specific Tutorial time for this course via the Online Registration system. Refer - http://studinfo1.newcastle.edu.au/rego/stud_choose_login.cfm

NB: Registrations close at the end of week 2 of semester.

Studentmail and Blackboard: Refer - www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/

This course uses Blackboard and studentmail to contact students, so you are advised to keep your email accounts within the quota to ensure you receive essential messages. To receive an expedited response to queries, post questions on the Blackboard discussion forum if there is one, or if emailing staff directly use the course code in the subject line of your email. Students are advised to check their studentmail and the course Blackboard site on a weekly basis.

Written Assignment Presentation and Submission Details

Students are required to submit assessment items by the due date. Late assignments will be subject to the penalties described below.

Hard copy submission:

- **Type your assignments:** All work must be typewritten in 11 or 12 point black font. Leave a wide margin for marker’s comments, use 1.5 or double spacing, and include page numbers.
- **Word length:** The word limit of all assessment items should be strictly followed – 10% above or below is acceptable, otherwise penalties may apply.
- **Proof read your work** because spelling, grammatical and referencing mistakes will be penalised.
- **Staple the pages** of your assignment together (do not use pins or paper clips).
- **University Assessment Item Coversheet:** All assignments must be submitted with the University coversheet available at: http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/forms/
- **By arrangement with the relevant lecturer, assignments may be submitted at any Student Hub located at:**
  - Level 3, Shortland Union, Callaghan
  - Level 2, Student Services Centre, Callaghan
  - Ground Floor, University House, City
  - Opposite Café Central, Ourimbah
- **Date-stamping assignments:** All students must date-stamp their own assignments using the machine provided at each Student Hub. If mailing an assignment, this should be addressed to the relevant School. Mailed assignments are accepted from the date posted, confirmed by a Post Office date-stamp; they are also date-stamped upon receipt by Schools.
- **Do not fax or email assignments:** Only hard copies of assignments will be considered for assessment. Inability to physically submit a hard copy of an assignment by the deadline due to other commitments or distance from campus is an unacceptable excuse.
- **Keep a copy of all assignments:** It is the student’s responsibility to produce a copy of their work if the assignment goes astray after submission. Students are advised to keep updated back-ups in electronic and hard copy formats.

Online copy submission to Turnitin

In addition to hard copy submission, students are required to submit an electronic version of the following assignments to Turnitin via the course Blackboard website available @ www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/

*The Summary Document of the Seminar Presentation (Task 1) is to be submitted to Turnitin
*The Major Assessment Task (Task 2) is to be submitted to Turnitin
Prior to final submission, all students have the opportunity to submit one draft of their assignment to Turnitin to self-check their referencing. Assignments will not be marked until both hard copy and online versions have been submitted. Marks may be deducted for late submission of either version.

**Penalties for Late Assignments**

Assignments submitted after the due date, without an approved extension of time will be penalised by the **reduction of 5% of the possible maximum mark** for the assessment item for each day or part day that the item is late. Weekends count as one day in determining the penalty. Assessment items submitted **more than ten days** after the due date will be awarded **zero marks**.


**Special Circumstances**

Students wishing to apply for Special Circumstances or Extension of Time should apply online. Refer - ‘Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items - Procedure 000641’ available @ [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html)

**Changing your Enrolment**

The last dates to withdraw without financial or academic penalty (called the HECS Census Dates) are:

For semester 1 courses: 31 March 2007

**For semester 2 courses: 31 August 2007**

For Trimester 1 courses: 18 February 2007

For Trimester 2 courses: 10 June 2007


Students may withdraw from a course without academic penalty on or before the last day of semester and prior to the commencement of the formal exam period. Any withdrawal from a course after the last day of semester will result in a fail grade.

Students cannot enrol in a new course after the second week of semester/trimester, except under exceptional circumstances. Any application to add a course after the second week of semester/trimester must be on the appropriate form, and should be discussed with the School Office.

To change your enrolment online, please refer to [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/enrolment/change-enrol.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/enrolment/change-enrol.html)

**No Assignment Re-submission**

Students who have failed an assignment are not permitted to revise and resubmit it in this course. However, students are always welcome to contact their Tutor, Lecturer or Course Coordinator to make a consultation time to receive individual feedback on their assignments.

**Re-marks & Moderations**

A student may only request a re-mark of an assessment item before the final result – in the course to which the assessment item contributes – has been posted. If a final result in the course has been posted, the
students must apply under ‘Procedures for Appeal Against a Final Result’ (Refer - http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/forms/).

Students concerned at the mark given for an assessment item should first discuss the matter with the Course Coordinator. If subsequently requesting a re-mark, students should be aware that as a result of a re-mark the original mark may be increased or reduced. The case for a re-mark should be outlined in writing and submitted to the Course Coordinator, who determines whether a re-mark should be granted, taking into consideration all of the following:

1. whether the student had discussed the matter with the Course Coordinator
2. the case put forward by the student for a re-mark
3. the weighting of the assessment item and its potential impact on the student’s final mark or grade
4. the time required to undertake the re-mark
5. the number of original markers, that is,
   a) whether there was a single marker, or
   b) if there was more than one marker whether there was agreement or disagreement on the marks awarded.

A re-mark may also be initiated at the request of the Course Coordinator, the Head of School, the School Assessment Committee, the Faculty Progress and Appeals Committee or the Pro Vice-Chancellor. Re-marks may be undertaken by:

1. the original marker; or
2. an alternate internal marker; or
3. an alternate external marker (usually as a consequence of a grievance procedure).

Moderation may be applied when there is a major discrepancy (or perceived discrepancy) between:

1. the content of the course as against the content or nature of the assessment item(s)
2. the content or nature of the assessment item(s) as against those set out in the Course Outline
3. the marks given by a particular examiner and those given by another in the same course
4. the results in a particular course and the results in other courses undertaken by the same students.

For further detail on this University policy refer - ‘Re-marks and Moderations - Procedure 000769’ available @ http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000769.html

Return of Assignments

Students can collect assignments from a nominated Student Hub during office hours. Students will be informed during class which Hub to go to and the earliest date that assignments will be available for collection. Students must present their student identification card to collect their assignment.


Preferred Referencing Style

In this course, it is recommended that you use the use the Harvard in-text referencing system (similar to the APA system) for referencing sources of information used in assignments. Inadequate or incorrect reference to the work of others may be viewed as plagiarism and result in reduced marks or failure.

An in-text citation names the author of the source, gives the date of publication, and for a direct quote includes a page number, in parentheses. At the end of the paper, a list of references provides publication information about the source; the list is alphabetised by authors’ last names (or by titles for works without authors). For further information on referencing and general study skills refer - ‘Infoskills’ available @ www.newcastle.edu.au/services/library/tutorials/infoskills/index.html

Note: in cases where a student is more conversant with APA referencing style-this will be accepted as long as the referencing is internally consistent throughout the entire body of the work.

Student Representatives
Student Representatives are a major channel of communication between students and the School. Contact details of Student Representatives can be found on School websites.

Refer - 'Information for Student Representatives on Committees’ available @

Student Communication

Students should discuss any course related matters with their Tutor, Lecturer, or Course Coordinator in the first instance and then the relevant Discipline or Program Convenor. If this proves unsatisfactory, they should then contact the Head of School if required. Contact details can be found on the School website.

Essential Online Information for Students

Information on Class and Exam Timetables, Tutorial Online Registration, Learning Support, Campus Maps, Careers information, Counselling, the Health Service and a range of free Student Support Services is available @ http://www.newcastle.edu.au/currentstudents/index.html

SUMMARY of ASSESSMENT TASKS

Assessment Task 1.

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*Students are required to submit their summary notes to support the peer training session.

*Length min 2,000 words, double-spaced, 12 font. Due date one week after presentation.

*Task 1. Represents 40% of Total marks for SPSW2002.

Assessment Criteria (Task 1.):
♦ Demonstrated reading, synthesis of literature and referencing;
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♦ Clarity and coherence of argument both orally within the seminar and in terms of the written communication within the summary paper;
♦ Engagement with the audience (Seminar) and the reader in terms of the written documentation;
Creativity and problem-solving in terms of the tutorial strategising ways and means of bringing the set reading material “alive”, and constructing experiential activities or focus questions for small group reflection;

Organisation, structure and presentation of the final summary

Assessment Task 2:

Assessment Task 2 has two components. First, there is a group research/problem-solving activity culminating in an informal feedback presentation to peers. Secondly, the insights generated in the group research are refined and synthesised into an individual discussion paper (2,500 word essay).

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  - A community development theory or model selected by you.

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- Reflection on your experiences during the group task, including the role you took in the group, what you did well, how you could improve the way you work in groups, and the dynamics of the group and how those interconnected forces assisted or inhibited the group process.

Assessment Criteria (Task 2.):

- Demonstrated reading, synthesis of literature and referencing;
- Critical thinking and demonstration of argument grounded in the readings;
- Personal reflection and development of a personal- political/ethical/and culturally sensitive stance;
- Clarity and coherence of argument;
- Organisation, structure and presentation of the final work.
**Grade:** 60%
**Due:** Week 14 November 1st 2007
**Length:** Min 2,500 words, double spaced, 12 point font

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<td>49% or less</td>
<td>Fail (FF) An unacceptable effort, including non-completion. The student has not understood the basic principles of the subject matter and/or has been unable to express their understanding in a comprehensible way. Deficient in terms of answering the question, research, referencing and correct presentation (spelling, grammar etc). May include extensive plagiarism.</td>
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<td>50% to 64%</td>
<td>Pass (P) The work demonstrates a reasonable attempt to answer the question, shows some grasp of the basic principles of the subject matter and a basic knowledge of the required readings, is comprehensible, accurate and adequately referenced.</td>
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<td>65% to 74%</td>
<td>Credit (C) The work demonstrates a clear understanding of the question, a capacity to integrate research into the discussion, and a critical appreciation of a range of different theoretical perspectives. A deficiency in any of the above may be compensated by evidence of independent thought. The work is coherent and accurate.</td>
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<td>75% to 84%</td>
<td>Distinction (D) Evidence of substantial additional reading and/or research, and evidence of the ability to generalise from the theoretical content to develop an argument in an informed and original manner. The work is well organised, clearly expressed and shows a capacity for critical analysis.</td>
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<td>85% upwards</td>
<td>High Distinction (HD) All of the above, plus a thorough understanding of the subject matter based on substantial additional reading and/or research. The work shows a high level of independent thought, presents informed and insightful discussion of the topic, particularly the theoretical issues involved, and demonstrates a well-developed capacity for critical analysis.</td>
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**Further Information**

Details about the following topics are available on your course Blackboard site (where relevant). Refer - [www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/](http://www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/)

- Written Assignment Presentation and Submission Details
- Online copy submission to Turnitin
- Penalties for Late Assignments
- Special Circumstances
- No Assignment Re-submission
- Re-marks & Moderations
- Return of Assignments
- Preferred Referencing Style
- Student Representatives
- Student Communication
- Essential Online Information for Students
Overview of Tutorial Program-Working With Communities

Tutorial Program: *Readings are available from NUSA services-these are required for the tutorial task and also will assist with the major assessment task (individual discussion paper).

WEEK 1. July 17th

WEEK 2. July 24th

WEEK 3. July 31st

WEEK 4. August 7th

WEEKS 5 & 6 August 14th and 21st

FIELD WORK

WEEK 7. August 28th
Debrief And Review of Oral Histories Research.

WEEK 8. September 4th

WEEK 9. September 11th

WEEK 10. September 18th
WEEKS 11 (25th September)

Group Research: Community Interventions-Capacity Building and Strengths based Strategies and Collaborative Approaches.

Students working in small groups will take the opportunity to consult with the course coordinator in individual sessions. Students are encouraged to utilise the available teaching rooms to allow communication and collaboration across the various groups and areas of research interest.

RECESS: MONDAY 1ST OCTOBER-FRIDAY 12TH OCTOBER 2007

And WEEK 12 (16th October)

Group Research: Community Interventions-Capacity Building and Strengths based Strategies and Collaborative Approaches.

Students working in small groups will take the opportunity to consult with the course coordinator in individual sessions. Students are encouraged to utilise the available teaching rooms to allow communication and collaboration across the various groups and areas of research interest.

Weeks 13 (25th October), and 14 (1st November) Group Forums
Feedback of Proposed Community Interventions-Groups will allocate themselves to present their research proposals during either weeks 13 or 14.