COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: THEORIES FOR PRACTICE
CRD 240 – Fall 2010
Wellman 211
CRN: 56868

Instructor: Dr. Chris Benner

When, Where and How to Connect:
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Overall Course Goals and Assumptions:
Community development interventions in this course are understood as activities to facilitate, strengthen, and improve less-advantaged communities, empower their residents to define and participate in the development process, and interact in larger social, political, and economic systems on behalf of the community.

This course is an opportunity for students to explore, develop, and apply an interdisciplinary set of theories useful for understanding and acting within the professional and academic field of community and regional development. This course starts from the basic assumption that community development is best characterized as complex. Complexity signifies that the amount of possibilities from which to choose by far exceeds what ever can become an implantable praxis. Hence, this abundance makes any applied decision precarious. It is against this canvass that the various elements of this course are projected. The many theoretical as well as –and thus- political approaches we will discuss in this course are meant to let the participants understand why the business of community development is a constant, never ending, and often contradictory process of shifting social figurations.

Overall Community Development Objectives
Participants are expected to gain insights into the following: Community development is a dynamic process by which disadvantaged people develop capacity to help improve and control their lives. The community development process is one that requires an
• Understanding of the nature of community groups and social solidarities,
• The nature and structures of power in society,
• The function of nonprofit and other community organizations,
• The ways services (e.g. social, environmental, economic) are provided, and
• The networks that tie community groups to each other in their local area, the region and the globe.

Specific Community Development Objectives
Community development functions to help community participants influence the direction of important public tasks including planning, governance, economic development, health and social service provision, responses to poverty, effective transportation, housing for all groups, and improved education and human resources. Changes in community practices over the last few decades have given increasing importance to community-wide collaboration, partnerships, and new forms of public-private organization. Similarly, the projects that community organizations are
involved in are vastly more complex than those of even a few years ago, requiring inputs of technical, financial, legal, and social service expertise.

The course will introduce students to a range of community development concepts and approaches that have been introduced in the literature, will develop the techniques and strategies of theory building, and will demonstrate the applications of community development theory in practice. The course assignments will be to prepare a series of three analytical essays and to complete a final project exploring and applying a key theoretical concept in the context of a local community development organization or community development project.

**Implicit Goal:**
This is the first course in the MS program in Community Development. Students are encouraged to get organized, become a community, and share responsibility for their program.

**Course Work:**
The class will be a combination of interactive lecture, discussion, and independent research. The emphasis in the course will be on exploring what is known about community development principles, approaches, theories, and applications, with particular emphasis on issues of how communities and community organizations can be mobilized to achieve their goals. The seminar will help students define concepts and eventually link concepts into theory that explains in a general way a case study and to use theories to analyze any number of similar cases. Theory building and application is presented as an intellectual strategy useful for all other graduate student courses and for the thesis. Learning is an interactive process, -- and especially for a course on community development -- active participation in class is a requirement. Active participation is not limited to speaking, however, and also includes careful listening and reflection. My hope is that this class can become a supportive and intellectually adventurous community of learning and teaching.

**Course Format:**
Class readings form the backbone of the course, providing the structure on which our class discussions and your out-of-class assignments will be developed. Therefore, you are expected to have read all the assigned readings for each class, and come prepared to engage in a thoughtful discussion on them. Groups of two-three will be responsible for leading the discussion of the readings each week. These groups should not assign readings separately to each person, rather, they should as a group, discuss all the readings and decide how to present them. You may find discussing the readings in groups before class will help you to develop a better understanding of the material. When leading discussions of readings, you and your group should consider the following:

1) What are the main themes/arguments in this reading?
2) What evidence does the author provide to support her/his argument?
3) How does this argument relate to other readings we have done?
4) What are the strengths and weaknesses of this argument and any data supporting it? Are terms defined clearly and used consistently? (If not, discuss the problems this creates.)
5) Are terms defined and used in the same way as in other readings? Would other authors we have
read agree/disagree with this argument. Why?

6) What additional questions does this reading raise for you? (Or put another way: if you and the author were stranded on a desert isle, what question would you most like to ask him or her? -- besides, “do you have a boat?”)

7) How could you use the ideas in addressing real world problems?

**Grades**

The three analytical essays will each count 10% of the final grade, and the final paper will count for 50%. Participation (including being present and prepared for class, engaging in class discussions and activities, class presentations, and working to support the effective functioning of the group will be the remaining 20%. There will be no mid-term or final examination.

*Examples of recent paper topics:*

- The role of local community in school reform: Theoretical underpinnings and a case study in Kentucky
- Self-Help Groups for Women in Afghanistan: A Strategy for Empowerment and Increased Household Income
- Effective Regional Equity Coalition Building: The Intersection of the Metropolitan Region, Comprehensive Equity Goals, and a Foundation of Trust
- Closing the Gap? Wilderness, Environmental Education and Accessibility in Silicon Valley
- A Rural Community Approach to improve Water Use Efficiency at the local level: Chilean study case
- Poverty: A new element injected into an existing understanding
- Comprehensive family-level community development: On the way to a community development micro-theory
- Leadership versus collaboration: exploring aspects of community development strategies in a failed public health outreach campaign
- Taking the fishing industry into account: Theoretical considerations involved in choosing self-sufficiency as the goal of development
- The mobilization of inside and outside resources: The implication of social capital for community development

**Course Assignments**

The course assignments are to prepare

- three short analytical essays and a
  - 1st paper due 10/13 online on SmartSite under “Assignments”
  - 2nd paper due 11/03 online on SmartSite under “Assignments”
  - 3rd paper due 11/17 online on SmartSite under “Assignments”
- final term project.
  - Due 12/10 online on SmartSite under “Assignments”

The short essays, each about 5 pages in length, are to be based on class readings, lecture material,
personal experience, and library research.

The final paper is a 15-20 page term-paper on a theoretical issue using an example from a community development organization or program, locally or anywhere in the world. The essay should be theoretical and analytical, using examples to explain key points. The purpose is not to do new research, but to utilize observations and experiences as well as easily collected documents to explore in depth an analytical problem that is at the core of community development and bring them into a discourse with the class readings or other, related, texts. Students can use material developed in their short essays in their final paper.

Papers will be presented during the last week of classes.

1. I want to acknowledge that this syllabus builds on and utilizes the expertise of others who have taught this course in recent years including Ted Bradshaw, Jonathan London and Frank Hirtz
There is not required text book for this course. All readings are available in pdf form on the smartsite for the course.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic and Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/27</td>
<td><strong>Course Introduction:</strong> Who are we? What are we here to do? How will we become a community? Class structure, process, and expectations.</td>
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</tbody>
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| 9/29    | **Theory and Practice: What value is theory?**  
hooks, bell. 1994. “Theory as Liberatory Practice” ch. 5 in *Teaching to Transgress*  
(New York: Routledge)  
Introduction.  
| 10/4    | **Conceptualizing Poverty and Development**  
| 10/6    | **Communities and Community Development**  
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Authors/References</th>
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Craig, Gary (2002) “Community Development in a Global Context” *Community Development Journal* 33:1, 2-17  
| 10/13  | ***First short paper due in class***                                                         |  
**History of Community Development, Theory and Practice**  
| 10/18  | **CDCs and Communities**                                                                     | Stoecker, Randy. The CDC model of urban development: A critique and an alternative. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 1997, Vol. 19 Issue 1, pp1-22  
Glickman, Norman J. and Lisa J. Servon. More than Bricks and Sticks: Five Components of Community Development Corporation Capacity. *Housing* |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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Listen Inc. (2000) An Emerging Model for Working with Youth: Community Organizing + Youth Development = Youth Organizing. (Funders’ Collaborative On Youth Organizing.)  
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<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>10/27 Wed.</td>
<td><strong>Ingredients of Success?</strong></td>
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<td>11/1 Mon.</td>
<td><strong>Race and Difference</strong></td>
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<td>Omi, Michael and Howard Winant (1994) <em>Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s</em> (New York: Routledge) Chapter 4 (Racial Formation) and Epilogue (Closing Pandora’s Box: Race and the “New Democrats”</td>
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<td>11/3 Wed.</td>
<td><em><strong>Second short paper due in class</strong></em></td>
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<td><strong>Complexity, Collaboration and Comprehensive Community Initiatives</strong></td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Social Capital</td>
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<td>11/17 Wed.</td>
<td><em><strong>Third Short Paper Due in Class</strong></em></td>
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<td>London, Jonathan and Bradshaw Ted, “A Rural that Matters.”</td>
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<td>11/24 Wed.</td>
<td><strong>THANKSGIVING BREAK—Work on your papers!!!</strong></td>
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<td>11/29 Mon.</td>
<td><strong>Student Paper Presentations (I) and Synthesis:</strong> How can theory be of use to those engaged with community development</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/1 Wed.</td>
<td><strong>Student Paper Presentations (II) and Synthesis:</strong> How can theory be of use to those engaged with community development</td>
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SHORT PAPER ASSIGNMENTS

These three papers are low risk assignments, each counting only 10 percent of your course grade—don’t panic, take risks, and try to be as creative and insightful as possible. The three papers can be used all or in part in your final paper.

1. PAPER PROPOSAL that analytically describes a community development project or process in terms of the needs, issues, and resources of the community in which it is located. Use any example you may have from personal experience or reading. Your example does not have to be fully worked out or based on previous successes. The purpose of this paper is to “articulate the question” you preliminarily want to address in your paper using concepts of community, poverty, organization, community development practice etc. You will need to include a discussion of how your case study will illustrate the concepts that you have selected. You will need to elaborate a bit on the concepts or discuss some of the potential that you have for developing those concepts in subsequent papers. In this paper you need to propose what you will do, but you also need to demonstrate that you have enough of an idea of how you will build a theoretical explanation that uses your case study. The paper should include a preliminary paper title that states the linkage of concepts with your case study. (eg, Models of Successful Technology Transfer for Non-Elite Universities)

2. ARTICULATE AND DEVELOP THE CONCEPTS that you first proposed in your previous paper. Whereas the first paper proposed your project, the second paper develops the concepts in the context of the organization or project you are studying. You will include some literature that helps you define your concepts and you can show how your concepts build on or differ from similar concepts in the literature. You will probably at this stage realize that you need several concepts to answer your question (for example, concepts of power, social capital, mobilization). Also in this paper you will want to start to develop your case study in the areas appropriate to the concepts you are utilizing. In developing your concepts you will want to show variations in the concept, (eg, 5 theories of poverty or the ladder of participation) and distinctions between the concept and other related concepts. This paper requires that you to become increasingly specific in defining your concepts and establishing an analytical framework. As you define your concepts, indicate how you would observe or measure them, explain the linkages between them, and discuss what difference it makes. You may change your concepts or your case study organization or project from the one you wrote about in the first paper, if necessary.
3. DEVELOP A THEORY THAT LINKS YOUR CONCEPTS INTO AN EXPLANATION.
This paper can largely fit directly into your final paper and will be the basis for your class presentation. You should restate the major theoretical question that you are trying to answer—what is it that you are trying to explain, using both reference to the case study and conceptual or theoretical issues from the readings. Make sure that you have a topic sentence for your paper; (For example, “The purpose of this paper is to explain how informal community associations are more or less effective depending on how closely they are linked to formal community institutions.”) Build your theoretical argument by first defining the concepts clearly, and then specify how the concepts are linked to each other. An important requirement of this paper is that you must draw a diagram that shows how your main concepts are linked to each other. Illustrate with reference to your case study.

FINAL PAPERS
1. Papers for CRD240 are exercises to demonstrate and develop your analytical skills. They are only secondarily about the organization or problem you are using as an example. Give the analytical content priority over description or new research projects.
2. Papers should have a title and use ample subheadings so that tired readers can follow your ideas.
3. Papers should be modeled on an academic journal article, such as the Journal of the Community Development Society. You will read plenty of these in the class. While not all are well done, they share lots of standard format features that you can follow. (By the way, a thesis is typically structured in the same way only a bit longer.) Such an article starts with an introductory statement of the analytical issue or problem and the example you are using, setting the issue in context of the literature. This is followed by a brief statement about the approach or research methodology (which in a theory paper would simply introduce your example as a case study and explain how you got the information you will present). The next section usually sets out the theoretical framework with brief reference to the case. Then you use your theoretical insights to apply to the “findings” of the case which you explicate in much more detail. Finally, in your conclusion you both summarize your paper and add other optional material such as cautions, limitations, or policy implications that you might not have wanted to introduce earlier.
4. You must have references to the literature. At minimum you should cite at least 5-6 references that apply from the class reader and several from your library research on the analytical issue of your paper. Most papers will also cite several studies concerning the case study example, but many students get their information from personal experience. All quotations need to be indicated as such and reference given to them (including if they came from an interview). Citations for articles need to include: author, title, journal name, date, issue, and pages. For books include at least author, title, place of publication, publisher, date, (and page if quoted or a specific part was used). Use web addresses for material from the internet. Any consistent punctuation format is OK. Best papers typically have ample
citations. (I find it easiest to insert last names and dates and pages if needed in the text, with a bibliography at the end, e.g., (Bradshaw, 1988: 324)

5. Do not forget to use articles from the class reader—they often provide a good base or context and opportunities to use them are obvious.

6. Remember that academic papers are not mystery novels—your reader should not be in suspense until the end about your main points or your theoretical perspectives.

7. In a theory paper you will know that you understand the relations between concepts if you can draw a diagram that shows how one concept leads to another. A good technique is to diagram your argument based on linkages of concepts and then fill in the examples from your research and make sure it fits. (This is required in the third short paper).

8. In this course I assign three short papers that can be used in the final paper. However, do not feel that you must use the earlier papers. Your final paper must stand on its own even if you have to rewrite everything. It is possible that three excellent short papers linked together will make a dreadful final paper. It is your responsibility to make sure the final paper is more than the sum of the parts.

9. Grading will be based on four factors: how clearly you define a good topic, how well you develop an analytical framework, how much information and justification you build into the paper, and how well written it is. “A” papers show creativity, original insight, interpretation; significant effort in researching the case and the relevant literature, and skill in integrating case study and analytical frameworks. “B” papers are sufficiently analytical, use concepts well, and are professional in their analysis and use of information, but do not make highly creative or original insight or use of the material.