

# Sociology 326 - Community Organization

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Discipline/Subject Area: [Sociology](#)

School: [University of the Sciences in Philadelphia](#)

Project Area:

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## A. Content and Procedures

The intent of this course is to provide students with conceptual tools and insight with which they might examine and experience community organizations from a sociological perspective. The basis of community sociology and social network theories will be presented to give students knowledge intended to be useful and valuable in their own personal lives as well as professional careers. A variety of phenomena will be analyzed in terms of their social meaning, i.e., appraised in terms of definitions - of situations, culture, roles, value, power, conflict, communication, structure, etc.

### **Community service obligations are essential components of the course.**

Opportunities for service responsibilities in the local neighborhood will lead to experience in the community. Students will write reports on their new knowledge, and share this with other students in the class.

**From the second to the twelfth week of class students will volunteer their service to local community organizations for at least one hour a week.** In the first week of class directions and a list of potential sites will be provided to the students. Students must meet with a representative of the selected community organization to schedule their activity. Students must then meet with the instructor to discuss the activity during that second week of class. The instructor will also be available each week during an office hour for further discussion. A ten-page typed report of their service activity and knowledge accrued through the experience will be integrated with classroom knowledge will be required by the twelfth week of class. Students will present a brief synopsis of these reports during the last three weeks of the semester.

The course is intended to approximate a seminar situation insofar as class size will permit. That is to say, while I will lay the foundations in lecture discussions, especially in the early weeks, subsequent responsibility for covering material will be shared with small groups of students each week. Each student will be expected to do supplemental readings and to prepare summaries and critiques of these readings for class presentation.

## **B. Course Objectives:**

Through course material and community service the student should be able to:

- Understand the role of social networks in communities
- Learn the role of community organizations
- Understand political situations
- Appreciate diversity
- Understand the collaborative role of universities in the community
- Identify the different models of collaboration
- Understand the relationship of community action and policy formation

## **C. Assignments and Evaluation**

There will be reading assignments from the textbook which are to be read prior to the class schedule for the given week. There will be three tests, and each student will be required to develop a report from their community service experience and class material, and make a brief presentation to the class. The report and presentation will be viewed as one assignment, and will be equally weighted with the tests. Though not foreseen, negative reports from the organizations may affect the grade.

## **D. Attendance**

The university policy on attendance will be followed. However, all students' viewpoints and others expressed in class are vital to the course. Continued absence becomes obvious to the rest of the class and deprives the class of the important contribution of your knowledge and opinions. In such a case, I would set up an interview to discuss the reasons for the absences. Excessive absence may result in loss of letter grade standing. Absences from community service responsibilities will have the same consequences.

## **E. Grading Procedures**

The final grade will be based on an average of the examination and the individual student grade from the community service report. Borderline cases will be judged in accordance with the class participation, and the determination of the instructor.

## **F. Academic Honesty**

Students who cheat on the examination or plagiarize materials for the assignment papers, and commit any such fraud will receive a failing grade for the given assignment.

## G. Texts:

- **Building Community, Social Science in Action**, Philip Nyden et al, Pine Forge Press, Thousand Oaks, CA 1997.
- **Political Networks, The Structural Perspective**, David Knoke, Cambridge University Press, 1994.

## Course Outline

Week I.	University-Community Collaborative Research	Nyden, Chapter I
	Politics in Structural Perspective	Knoke, Chapter I
Week II.	Effective Models of Collaboration	Nyden, Chapter 2
	Political Participation	Knoke, Chapter 2
Week III.	Diversity	Nyden, Case Study 1 Knoke, Chapter 3 Nyden, Case Study 2
Week IV.	Neighborhood Revitalization	Knoke, Chapter 4
	Organizational Power	
Week V.	Changing Neighborhood and Research	Nyden, Case Study 5
	<b>TEST 1</b>	
Week VI.	Organizing Access to Capital	Nyden, Case Study 4
	Community Power Structures	Knoke, Chapter 5
Week V111.	Environmental Collaboration	Nyden, p 65, Case Study 7
	Elites in the Nation State	Knoke, Chapter 6

## Spring Break

Week VIII.	Local Knowledge and Collaboration	Nyden, Case Study 9
	International Relations	Knoke, Chapter 7
Week IX.	New Models for Community-Based Research and Learning	Nyden, p 104, Case Study 12
	Toward a Structural Political Economy	Knoke, Chapter 8
Week X.	Bringing the Community into the University	Nyden, Case Study 14
	Puffing the University into the Streets	Case Study 15
	<b>TEST 2</b>	
	Earliest date for submission of reports	
Week XI.	Health Issues; Reframing the AIDS Epidemic	Nyden, p 152, Case Study 18
	Grass Roots Approaches to Violence Prevention	Case Study 22
Week XII.	Community Control and Voice	Nyden, p200, Case Study 23
	Imperfect Collaboration	Case Study 25
	End of Service Responsibilities; <b>Reports are due this week.</b> Late reports lose credit.	
Week XIII.	Participatory Action Research	Nyden, Case Study 27
	Collaboration: voice and	p. 240ff.

hope

Week XIV.

Future collaboration,  
service, research and  
learning

**FINAL TEST**