URPL 6400 - Community Development
COURSE SYLLABUS
Spring 2015

Instructor:  Dr. Jennifer Steffel Johnson
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Office Phone:  303-315-0061
Course Time/Location:  CAP 505 Wednesdays, 9:30 AM-12:15 PM
Office Hours:  Wednesdays, 12:30-2:30 PM or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this introduction to the field of community development in the U.S., we will investigate the meaning of key ideas such as “community” and “development,” and explore the roles that planners can play in developing community. We’ll discuss the historical roots of community development in the U.S., as well as some of its key theories, methods and practices. We will explore the ingredients that connect communities, practices that spark development, and the ways in which local communities can participate in the design and planning of neighborhoods, programs, campaigns and initiatives to suit their needs and objectives. This semester we will be partnering with Tri-County Health to support their efforts to introduce health-related considerations into the urban planning process. The project will involve engaging directly with community members, learning about the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) process, and communicating our findings to decision makers.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To become familiar with the nature and dynamics of communities and community development
2. To appreciate the value of community development as a component of planning, and understand the roles that planners and other stakeholders play in community development
3. To understand the opportunities for community development provided by different types of capital
4. To understand some of the key physical factors that can impact a community’s development, such as housing, transportation, economic development, and health—and the role that community development can play in changing those factors
5. To learn what characterizes successful community development initiatives
6. To address the challenges inherent in the community development process
7. To understand community development as a professional field, including its history within the U.S. context, and its relevant theories, methods and practices
8. To appreciate the ethical challenges inherent in community development processes, such as public decision making and responding to diverse stakeholders, as well as the social justice implications of community development decisions
9. To make valuable contributions to community-based organizations and initiatives
10. To improve writing and oral presentation skills
LEARNING OUTCOMES:
The Department of Planning and Design has incorporated the Planning Accreditation Board’s (PAB) standards for teaching planning knowledge, skills and values into the curricula of our courses. The following PAB Learning Outcomes will be assessed in this course:

Primary:
- Growth and Development: appreciation of economic, social and cultural factors in urban and regional growth and change
- Governance and Participation: appreciation of the roles of officials, stakeholders and community members in planned change
- Written, Oral and Graphic Communication: ability to prepare clear, accurate and compelling text, graphics and maps for use in documents and presentations

Secondary:
- Planning Process Methods: tools for stakeholder involvement, community engagement, and working with diverse communities
- Purpose and Meaning of Planning: appreciation of why planning is undertaken by communities, cities, regions, and nations, and the impact planning is expected to have
- Professional Ethics and Responsibility: appreciation of key issues of planning ethics and related questions of the ethics of public decision making, research and client representation
- Social Justice: appreciation of equity concerns in planning

COURSE VIRTUES:
- **Intellectual curiosity.** Be open to new ideas; ask questions; reflect on what you're learning; think about things in new ways.
- **Analytic thinking.** Look for hidden assumptions in readings; compare and contrast theoretical perspectives; check theoretical ideas against your own experience; notice inconsistencies in arguments; entertain counter-arguments.
- **True participation.** Actively participate in discussions; attend class; complete readings before class; give careful thought to writing assignments; proofread writing before turning it in; give yourself time necessary to do a task well; meet assignment deadlines.
- **Collaborative learning.** Be respectful towards other students’ ideas, especially when you disagree; participate in discussions and small group tasks; ask for clarification; address your comments and questions to each other as much as to the instructor; learn from each other.

COURSE EVALUATION/ REQUIREMENTS:
In advance of each assignment, I will provide you with a rubric outlining what is expected of you on that assignment. These rubrics are designed to give you ongoing feedback about your progress in the course and provide a basis for improving your overall performance and learning experience. You are responsible for reading rubrics in advance of each assignment and asking questions if you do not understand something. **Late assignments will not be accepted.** Please work with me in a timely manner to resolve any problems you may encounter.

**Active Class Participation and Regular Attendance (25%)** – Class attendance and participation is essential for success in this course. Each *unexcused* absence will reduce your course grade by 5%. Because this is a graduate seminar, it is expected that you will complete all the readings on time and come prepared to make substantive contributions to the weekly class discussions. Though I will
provide brief "lectures" relating to course topics throughout the semester, the remaining class time will involve active participation and discussion by seminar participants.

**Community Development “Catalyst” Presentation (5%)** – You will each make a brief presentation to the class describing an interesting example of an event, place, incident, process, or object that has contributed to a community’s development.

**Public Meeting Attendance and Analysis (10%)** – You will attend two public meetings of your choice in the Denver metro area that deal with neighborhood planning and community development projects and processes. You'll write reflection notes and a brief analysis of each meeting you attend. Meeting examples include neighborhood civic association monthly meetings, public hearings, city-wide coalition and task force meetings, design charrettes focused on planning or urban design projects, and the like.

**Reflective Essay Writing (15%)** – You will be asked to write several brief (i.e., approximately two-page) essays during the semester. These writing assignments are intended to encourage you to think more deeply about course topics and reading assignments, and to connect these ideas to your own experiences or your course project.

**Community Action Project (45%)** – This semester we will be partnering with Tri-County Health to support their efforts to introduce health-related considerations into the urban planning process. The project will involve engaging directly with community members, learning about the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) process, and communicating our findings to decision makers.
COURSE SCHEDULE:

This is a tentative schedule of course topics, readings and assignments. Please monitor updates on Canvas and as announced in class. All readings will be made available under “Modules” on Canvas.

1) January 21: Introduction to the Course

   No assigned readings

2) January 28: Community: Definitions, Theories and Lived Realities


   Reflective Essay 1 due

3) February 4: Introduction to Community Development


4) February 11: Community Development and Equity Planning


5) February 18: The History and Policy Context of Community Development


6) February 25: Field Trip: Auraria Campus with Gregorio Alcaro, Auraria Casa Mayan Heritage


7) March 4: Community Organizing in the United States

Guest Speaker: Virginia Castro, MSW- community organizer


8) March 11: Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) and Social Capital


Reflective Essay 2 due

9) March 18: Public Participation in Community Development

Guest Speaker: Vickie Berkley, Colorado Center for Community Development
March 25- SPRING BREAK (no class)

10) April 1: CDCs and the Role of Housing in Community Development


11) April 8: The Economic-Community Development Connection and Community Benefits Agreements


12) April 15: Community “Development” vs. Gentrification


13) April 22: Developing Healthy Communities


See Canvas for selection of additional reading assignment.
14) April 29: How Do We Get There? The Role of Transportation in Community Development


15) May 6: Final Project Presentations

16) May 13: (Finals Week)

**UNIVERSITY POLICIES:**

**Academic Honesty:** Plagiarism is the use of another person's words or ideas without crediting that person. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated and may lead to failure on an assignment, in the class, and dismissal from the University. You are responsible for being attentive to and observant of campus policies about academic honesty as stated in the University's Student Conduct Code.

**Access, Disability, Communication:** I invite students with special needs to contact me to discuss any concerns or needs they may have. Please notify me if you require accommodation for any type of physical or learning disability. Formal accommodations for students with disabilities should be coordinated through the Disability Services office, (303) 556-3450. The Disability Services office will determine the special needs and student's eligibility for special accommodation.

**Course Communication:** In addition to announcements made and written handouts distributed in class, I may need to contact you between classes, which I'll do through individual and group email messages. **One of the requirements for this course is that you maintain a university email address, check it regularly for messages and be sure it is working.** You are responsible for any messages, including assignments and schedule changes, I send you via email. You also may contact me via email, in addition to seeing me during office hours or calling me.

**Non-Discrimination Policy:** The University of Colorado does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation, or political philosophy in admission and access to, and treatment and employment in, its educational programs and activities...All students shall have the same fundamental rights to equal respect, due process, and judgment of them based solely on factors demonstrably related to performance and expectations as students. All students share equally the obligations to perform their duties and exercise judgments of others in accordance with the basic standards of fairness, equity, and inquiry that should always guide education (Article 10 of the Laws of the Regents of the University of Colorado).