Graduate Seminar: “Community Sociology”
Frederick Weil, LSU Sociology

This seminar introduces students to community research: substance, research, and methods. A large dataset on community recovery from Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans will be used to illustrate methods. Topics covered include a range of substantive topics, as well as methods: how to combine quantitative, ethnographic, organizational, geo-spatial, content analytical, photographic, video, comparative historical, multi-level, & other methods in community research – including issues in data collection (incl survey sampling) – to derive a fuller picture. The instructor will walk students through the steps taken in the New Orleans research, and these materials will be available, with limitations, for student projects. The students will propose and conduct a research project of their own. This project may be based on data analysis (quantitative or qualitative), and/or on a literature review. The topic must be approved by the instructor, who will advise and assist the student in developing the project.

The work of the seminar will proceed on three tracks: (1) a literature review of the sociology of community, social capital, civic engagement, and associated research methodologies; (2) presentations by the instructor of the development of a large research project on community recovery in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina; and (3) the development and presentation of student projects. Important: it is not possible to bring all these tracks fully into sync with each other. In particular, the review of such a large body of literature cannot be fully coordinated with the other tracks, though by the end of the semester, we will have covered all tracks. Students may want to read ahead in some sections, if the material is needed for their student projects: the instructor can help advise on this.

Class requirements:

- Reading and participation in class discussion.
- Writing and presentation of materials for your research project: (a) an abstract, (b) a research proposal and study design, and (c) a report of findings. A written version should be submitted to the instructor the day before the class at which they are presented.
- One 20 page paper, based on your research project, due on Monday, May 4, 2020, at noon. Students must submit both paper and digital copies.

Class website:

http://www.rickweil.com/Classes/CommunitySoc.htm (see http://www.rickweil.com/)
Also: http://www.lsu.edu/fweil/KatrinaResearch,

(rev. 1/1/20)
Books to get:


Suggested:


*Available as an e-book at the LSU library.

Weekly topics and readings

Week 1. Introduction

*Readings: Theories of Community and Social Capital 1. Founders*

Alexis de Tocqueville review from your theory classes; selections in Ostrom and Ahn.


Jane Jacobs, “The Uses of City Neighborhoods,” in Lin and Mele or Ostrom and Ahn


Week 2. Concepts of community: social capital, inequality, power, solidarity, organization, leadership, culture

Readings: *Theories of Community and Social Capital* 2. Next Generation(s), Critics, Summarizers

Robert J. Sampson, *Great American city*, Ch. 2

Robert J. Sampson, “What Community Supplies.” Chap 36 in DeFilippis & Saegert

Hartmut Esser, “The Two Meanings of Social Capital,” chapter 1 in Castiglione, van Deth, and Wolleb


Barry Wellman and Barry Leighton, “Networks, Neighborhoods, and Communities: Approaches to the Study of the Community Question,” in Lin and Mele


*Suggested:*


Claude S. Fischer, “Theories of Urbanism,” in Lin and Mele


**Week 3.** Research design and preparation for entering the field & collecting data

- Background ethnographic exploration.
- Operationalizing theoretical constructs for quantitative measurement.
- Multiple levels of data collection: community members; community leaders; organizations.

*Assignment: Presentation of Student Abstracts*


Eric M. Uslaner, “Trust as a Moral Value,” chapter 4 in Castiglione, van Deth, and Wolleb

Kenneth Newton, “Trust and Politics,” chapter 9 in Castiglione, van Deth, and Wolleb

Bo Rothstein and Dietlind Stolle, “Political Institutions and Generalized Trust,” chapter 10 in Castiglione, van Deth, and Wolleb


Suggested:


**Week 4.** Working with community organizations, nonprofits, & others

- Engaging with the community: issues in participant observation & action research; the role of the researcher
Assignment: Student Study Design Presentations

Readings: Community and Democracy at the Local Level


Herman Lelieveldt, “Neighborhood Politics,” chapter 12 in Castiglione, van Deth, and Wolleb


Week 5. Quantitative methods: issues in field methods of data collection & strategies of sampling

Assignment: Student Study Design Presentations

Readings: Methodological Issues in Community Research

Jan W. van Deth, “Measuring Social Capital,” chapter 6 in Castiglione, van Deth, and Wolleb


Sampling Issues after Katrina (just read for sampling information):


Suggested:


**Week 6.** Quantitative methods: mapping data & geospatial analysis

**Readings: Community and Geography**


**Suggested:**


**Week 7.** Quantitative methods: merging & managing data; combining one’s own survey data & government data; multilevel analysis

**Readings: Social Capital, Community Development, Neighborhood Change: Poverty, Development, Gentrification, Short-term Rentals (e.g. Airbnbs)**

Weil, Frederick D., Edward Shihadeh, and Timothy T. Reling. “Do collective resources reduce the number of Airbnbs in a neighborhood? Evidence from New

Vivien Lowndes and Lawrence Pratchett, “Public Policy and Social Capital,” chapter 24 in Castiglione, van Deth, and Wolleb


Alice O’Connor, “Swimming against the Tide: A Brief History of Federal Policy in Poor Communities.” Chap 2 in DeFilippis & Saegert

James DeFilippis, “Community Control and Development: The Long View.” Chap 3 in DeFilippis & Saegert

Sites, William, Robert J. Chaskin, and Virginia Parks, “Reframing community practice for the 21st century: Multiple traditions, multiple challenges.” Chap 4 in DeFilippis & Saegert

Norman J. Glickman and Lisa J. Servon, “More than Bricks and Sticks: Five Components of Community Development Corporation Capacity.” Chap 6 in DeFilippis & Saegert

Susan Stall and Randy Stoecker, “Community Organizing or Organizing Community? Gender and the Crafts of Empowerment.” Chap 22 in DeFilippis & Saegert


David Micah Greenberg, “How Does Community Matter for Community Organizing?” Chap 25 in DeFilippis & Saegert

Randy Stoecker, “The CDC Model of Urban Development: A Critique and an Alternative.” Chap 42 in DeFilippis & Saegert

Anne C. Kubisch, Patricia Auspos, Prudence Brown, Robert Chaskin, Karen Fulbright-Anderson, and Ralph Hamilton, “Strengthening the Connections between Communities and External Resources.” Chap 43 in DeFilippis & Saegert


*Suggested:*


John Logan and Harvey Molotch, “The City as a Growth Machine,” in Lin and Mele


Richard Florida, “Cities and the Creative Class,” in Lin and Mele

Loic J.D. Wacquant and William Julius Wilson, “The Cost of Racial and Class Exclusion in the Inner City,” in Lin and Mele


Owens, Michael Lee, “Capacity Building: The case of faith-based organizations.” Chap 15 in DeFilippis & Saegert

Prudence Brown, Robert Chaskin, Ralph Hamilton, and Harold Richman, “Toward Greater Effectiveness in Community Change: Challenges and Responses for Philanthropy.” Chap 16 in DeFilippis & Saegert
Mayer, Neil and Langley Keyes, “City Government’s Role in the Community Development System.” Chap 17 in DeFilippis & Saegert

Fisher, Robert, DeFilippis, James, and Eric Shragge, “History Matters: Cannons, Anti-Cannons and Critical Lessons from the Past.” Chap 21 in DeFilippis & Saegert

Bill Traynor, “Community Building: Limitations and Promises.” Chap 23 in DeFilippis & Saegert


**Week 8.** Qualitative methods: visual sociology, photo essays, video ethnography – field work, post-production, & editing (see http://www.rickweil.com/NolaNBHs/, http://www.rickweil.com/Visual/)

**Readings:** *Ethnographic Studies of Community* (read selections of your choice in 2-3 of the following)

Duneier, Mitchell, Philip Kasinitz, and Alexandra A. Murphy, eds. 2014. *The Urban Ethnography Reader.* New York: Oxford University Press. (selections)


**Week 9.** Qualitative methods: content analysis; grounded theory; transcript coding & emergent categories; theory development

**Readings: Social Capital and Disaster Recovery**


Suggested:


**Week 10.** Comparative historical context and the logic of analysis: combining multi-method materials to develop and test hypotheses, and tell a complete story and structural analysis

**Readings: Social Capital and Participation**


William Maloney, “Interests Groups and Social Capital,” chapter 11 in Castiglione, van Deth, and Wolleb

Marc Hooghe, “Voluntary Associations and Socialization,” chapter 20 in Castiglione, van Deth, and Wolleb

**Suggested:**


Week 11. Student Reports

Readings: Collective Efficacy, Crime, and Social Networks


Robert J. Sampson, Great American city, ch. 5-8


Suggested:


Weil, Frederick D. “Conducting a Large Resident Survey to Understand Crime after a Disaster: Utility, Challenges, Limitations.” Paper to be included in a special issue of the American Behavioral Scientist on Crime and Disaster, edited by Kelly Frailing.


**Week 12. Student Reports**

**Readings: Social Capital and (National) Economic Development**


Anirudh Krishna, “The Role of Social Capital in Development,” chapter 16 in Castiglione, van Deth, and Wolleb