

**Faculty of Health**  
**Department of Psychology**  
**PSYC 3600 3.0 A: Community Psychology**  
**July 5 to July 15 at Las Nubes Eco-Campus**  
**Summer 2023**

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**Instructor Information**

Instructor: Michael  
Office Hours: by appointment  
Email: [mpettit@yorku.ca](mailto:mpettit@yorku.ca)

**Course Prerequisite(s): None**

**Course Credit Exclusions**

Please refer to [York Courses Website](#) for a listing of any course credit exclusions.

**Course website:** [eClass](#)

**Course Description**

This course will examine various topics related to community psychology, including theories and research, prevention and early intervention, community mental health, the community practitioner as social change agent, and applications of community psychology to various settings and situations. In general, community psychology is concerned with the application of psychological principles to understand and address social issues that affect communities (e.g., schools, neighbourhoods, the workplace, the larger society), such as child abuse, homelessness, school violence, racism, crime, mental illness, and substance abuse. An aim of community psychology is to draw upon the resources of communities to develop solutions to resolve or prevent problems.

The international version of the course will emphasize critical social action approaches to community mental health. Costa Rica ranks among the happiest places on earth, according to the World Values Survey and related measures. This course builds from this observation to examine what factors (such as family life, community networks, demilitarization, and ecological consciousness) sustain such high levels of subjective well-being. We will also examine the persistence of psychosocial problems in various communities. The theoretical readings derive from a blend of North American community psychology, Latin American liberation psychology, and South African critical/decolonial psychology. Hosting the course at the Las Nubes campus offers the unique opportunity for York students specializing in psychology and health to interact with community and liberation psychology programs operating in Costa Rica to understand their distinctive histories, theories, and practices.

## Program Learning Outcomes

*By the end of this course, students will be able to:*

## Program Learning Objectives

- 1) critically analyze the major historical influences and contemporary approaches to community psychology
- 2) understand the main conceptual issues related to the provision and evaluation of services from a community-based perspective
- 3) understand the major research findings and concepts in community psychology and think critically about the various approaches to community psychology research
- 4) consider the practical and policy implications of the work generated by community psychologists
- 5) use the vocabulary and concepts of the field of community psychology

## Course Specific Learning Objectives

- 1) understanding the interconnections among the natural environment, a sense of community, and psychological resilience and wellbeing
- 2) develop a critical appreciation of the decolonial, social action, and liberatory approaches to community psychology developed in the region

## Required Text

Various article available through the York library catalogue.

## Course Requirements and Assessment:

| Assessment                         | Date of Evaluation | Weighting   |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Participation in course discussion | Throughout course  | 20%         |
| Film Review                        | June 30, 2023      | 20%         |
| Journal                            | Throughout course  | 10%         |
| Oral reflection                    | Throughout course  | 20%         |
| Final paper                        | August 4, 2023     | 30%         |
| <b>Total</b>                       |                    | <b>100%</b> |

## Description of Assignments

### Pre-Departure Film Review

Due: June 30, 2023, at 11:59pm via eclass

Length: 1000-1200 words

As part of our preparation for the experiential activities in Costa Rica, I am asking you to watch the films **below before our departure**. They will introduce you to the history of psychology in Central America and the local communities surrounding the Las Nubes campus with whom we will interact during the course. Each film is fairly short (about 1 hour each).

The first is a lecture given by the American community psychologist M. Brinton Lykes (Boston College) about her friend and collaborator Ignacio Martín-Baró (1942-1989), whose ideas and actions are foundational to the liberation psychology we will be studying this course.

The other 3 films are produced by the Grounded Project housed at the Las Nubes campus whose approach is “to bringing awareness to issues concerning environmental sustainability, biodiversity conservation, health, and human well-being in Costa Rica through the creation of a series of documentary films spotlighting rural community lives.” The films exemplify the use of participatory methods to foreground community voices.

To facilitate the viewing and to have further opportunities to get to know one another as a group before our departure, I will be screening the films at the following times. This is optional. They are all freely, available on Youtube if you cannot attend.

Optional screenings:

2:30pm on May 16<sup>th</sup>, location TBA

### **Liberation Psychology and Social Change: An Introduction to Ignacio Martín-Baró and Challenges for 21st Century Practitioners**

<https://vimeo.com/81222221>

### **More than Migrants**

<https://youtu.be/oDuBRoO6BHE>

2:30pm on May 25<sup>th</sup>, location TBA

### **Buried Seed (peasants)**

<https://youtu.be/vlWwzguffRo>

**We Walk the Earth** (indigenous persistence)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W60bVbp\\_wUE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W60bVbp_wUE)

### **Writing your review**

This course centres upon **critical reflection** as we integrate the experiential activities we undertake in Costa Rica with the academic readings for the course. The goal is to create a dialogue between the two so each informs the other. This involves both careful observation of our surroundings and deliberate, conscious reflection upon these experiences. This process begins with this assignment.

You will select 1 of the films to make the focus on your review.

Your review should include the following components. You do not need to use subheadings for each element, but a successful response will have all of these components. I would recommend introducing them in the order listed.

**Description:** This involves a succinct summary of the content of the film under review. Think of the classic 5 Qs: who, what, where, when, and why. Who is subject of the film? When and where did the events depicted take place? What is the film's core message or theme? (approximately 400 words)

**Analysis:** This involves stepping back from your initial summary and asking the "so what?" question. What caught your attention and seemed especially significant to you? What emotions did your experience while watching the film? What new ideas did it raise? Why do you think this film was made? Did the film achieve its goals? How is this film related to the other films for the course? If you have started doing the readings for the class, how does the film relate to them? How does its content illustrate the academic theories? How does it challenge? (approximately 400 words)

**Reflection:** How has watching this film framed or altered your expectations for our course in Costa Rica? What kinds of questions or areas of inquiry does it inspire? How might we go about answering these during our course? (approximately 200 words)

## **Oral Reflection**

Once during the course, you will be responsible for opening our discussion of the required readings by offering a short (10 minutes) oral reflection upon them.

The oral reflection should be succinct but include a number of elements:

- 1) Identify a core term/concept/construct central to the reading. Briefly define what the concept means in the context of the reading. Explain why you chose this concept. Why is it important for understanding this reading? What does it contribute to our knowledge?
- 2) Identify a passage or two in the reading relevant to your chosen concept.
- 3) Pose 2-3 questions inspired by chosen concept and quotation to help frame our general discussion for the day. These questions can come in a number of forms. They can be clarification questions to help us understand the concept's meaning. They can be connecting questions linking that day's readings to others we have encountered in the class. They can be reflective questions linking our theoretical readings in the classroom to our recent experiences in Costa Rica. How do the ideas presented in the articles help us understanding our experiential activities? How does what we are learning in our experiential activities challenge the theories advanced in the readings?

## **Journaling your Experience**

As part of the experiential education component of this course, I am asking you to maintain a physical and/or digital journal (most likely a hybrid of both) documenting your experiences during this course. I will be maintaining one, too! The journal may include photographs/video taken (with people's permission), recordings of the soundscape, quotations selected from the readings, your own impressions, and creative expression (poetry, imagined dialogues, etc.).

This is an opportunity to record and process your thoughts about what you will encounter during the course: people you met, concepts you learned, ideas shared. What is your own personal narrative? How are you making sense of what we are experiencing?

This journal will become an invaluable resource as you come to do your oral presentations and write the final reflection paper.

In addition to time while traveling on the bus and at the home stays in the evenings, I will set aside times for quiet reflection throughout this class.

## Best Practices

Make writing a habit! Write regularly

Use your journal to make concrete connection among the readings, discussions, and field trips

Make concrete connections between your journal entries, help construct your own narrative for this course

Use the writing to challenge yourself

Use the journal to research questions you may pose during the classroom discussion as part of your facilitation

Practice writing well: use full sentences, proper grammar and punctuation

## Possible questions to pose during your reflection period:

Who did I meet today? Make sure you write down people's name, affiliation, and location when meeting them, so you have for future reference.

What did I read? What ideas did they convey to me?

How did I react to this experience or reading? Why did I react in this way?

How did this experience make me think differently than before?

**I will review the journals twice during our time in Costa Rica and mark them as pass/fail.**

## **Final Paper**

The goal of this assignment is to use critical reflection to **integrate** the theoretical readings and experiential activities from this course. I want you select one or two concepts we discussed in the course and reflect upon one of our experiential activities through the lens they provide. How have these readings and experiences changed your understanding of “community”?

**All papers should double spaced, using a 12-point font size, and submitted as a Word file**

**Word count:** 2000 words plus references

**Due:** August 4, 2023

A successful paper will include each of the following components:

- 1) All research papers need a strong introduction and conclusion which explain to the reader the paper’s focus and outlines the argument. (approximately 200-300 words)
- 2) Define and explain the significance of **2-3 core concepts** central to critical/community/liberation psychology. You should explain how these concepts are understood in the field, have been elucidated, and contested. Your basis for this should come from the **required readings for the course**. In prior **consultation with instructor**, you may incorporate **additional** readings. You may quote from these articles but make sure you explain why any quotation you use is meaningful. You must cite the sources you used for your chosen concepts. (approximately 400-600 words)
- 3) You should clearly describe one of the main experiential activities we undertook in the course. This could be a guest lecture, an excursion, a meeting with a local group. You should draw upon your journal kept during the class to inform your description. (approximately 400-600 words)
- 4) Finally, and most crucially, I want you to reflect on how the theoretical reading and the experiential activity speak to one another. How did the theoretical reading shape your understanding of the experience? How did the psychological concept illuminate an aspect the experience that was not clear? Conversely, how did the experience should the limitation of the reading? How well did the psychological concept travel from its original context to our experience in Costa Rica? How might our experiences in Costa Rica help you to further develop your chosen psychological concepts? (approximately 500-600)

## Class Format and Attendance Policy

Students are expected to participate fully in all activities, lectures, and discussion sessions during this course.

## Grading as per Senate Policy

The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ = 7, C+ = 5, etc.). Assignments and tests\* will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 89, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.)

For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar – [Grading Scheme for 2022-23](#)

## Missed Tests/Midterm Exams/Late Assignment

For any missed quiz or late assignment, students MUST complete the following online form which will be received and reviewed in the Psychology undergraduate office. At this time, due to COVID-19 an Attending Physician’s Statement (APS) is not required, however, a reason for missing an evaluated component in the course must be provided.

[HH PSYC: Missed Tests/Exams Form](#). Failure to complete the form within 48 hours of the original deadline will result in a grade of zero for the missed quiz or late assignment.

## Add/Drop Deadlines

For a list of all important dates please refer to: [Summer 2023 Important Dates](#)

|   | SU Term           | S1 Term           | S2 Term            |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Last date to add a course <b>without permission</b> of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)            | May 22            | May 12            | July 10            |
| Last date to add a course <b>with permission</b> of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)               | June 5            | May 19            | July 17            |
| Drop deadline: Last date to drop a course without receiving a grade (also see Financial Deadlines)          | July 7            | June 5            | July 24            |
| Course Withdrawal Period (withdraw from a course and receive a grade of “W” on transcript – see note below) | July 17 – Aug. 15 | June 13 – June 26 | July 31- – Aug. 15 |

## Add and Drop Deadline Information

There are deadlines for adding and dropping courses, both academic and financial. Since, for the most part, the dates are **different**, be sure to read the information carefully so that you understand the differences between the sessional dates below and the [Refund Tables](#).

You are strongly advised to pay close attention to the "Last date to enrol without permission of course instructor" deadlines. These deadlines represent the last date students have unrestricted access to the registration and enrolment system.

After that date, you must contact the professor/department offering the course to arrange permission.

You can drop courses using the registration and enrolment system up until the last date to drop a course without receiving a grade (drop deadline).

You may [withdraw from a course](#) using the registration and enrolment system after the drop deadline until the last day of class for the term associated with the course. When you withdraw from a course, the course remains on your transcript without a grade and is notated as 'W'. The withdrawal will not affect your grade point average or count towards the credits required for your degree.

### **Information on Plagiarism Detection**

The film review and final reflection paper will be submitted via Turnitin.

### **Academic Integrity for Students**

York University takes academic integrity very seriously; please familiarize yourself with [Information about the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#).

It is recommended that you review Academic Integrity by completing the [Academic Integrity Tutorial](#) and [Academic Honesty Quiz](#)

### **Test Banks**

The offering for sale of, buying of, and attempting to sell or buy test banks (banks of test questions and/or answers), or any course specific test questions/answers is not permitted in the Faculty of Health. Any student found to be doing this may be considered to have breached the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty. In particular, buying and attempting to sell banks of test questions and/or answers may be considered as “Cheating in an attempt to gain an improper advantage in an academic evaluation” (article 2.1.1 from the Senate Policy) and/or “encouraging, enabling or causing others” (article 2.1.10 from the Senate Policy) to cheat.

### **Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**

While all individuals are expected to satisfy the requirements of their program of study and to aspire to do so at a level of excellence, the university recognizes that persons with disabilities may require reasonable accommodation to enable them to do so. The university encourages students with disabilities to register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to discuss their accommodation needs as early as possible in the term to establish the recommended academic accommodations that will be communicated to Course Directors as necessary. Please let me know as early as possible in the term if you anticipate requiring academic accommodation so that we can discuss how to consider your accommodation needs within the context of this course.

<https://accessibility.students.yorku.ca/>

### **Excerpt from Senate Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**

1. Pursuant to its commitment to sustaining an inclusive, equitable community in which all members are treated with respect and dignity, and consistent with applicable accessibility legislation, York University shall make reasonable and appropriate accommodations in order to promote the ability of students with disabilities to fulfill the academic requirements of their programs. This policy aims to eliminate systemic barriers to participation in academic activities by students with disabilities.

All students are expected to satisfy the essential learning outcomes of courses. Accommodations shall be consistent with, support and preserve the academic integrity of the curriculum and the academic standards of courses and programs. For further information please refer to: [York University Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities Policy](#).

### **Course Materials Copyright Information**

These course materials are designed for use as part of the Psych 3600 course at York University and are the property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third party copyrighted materials (such as book chapters, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian Copyright law.

Copying this material for distribution (e.g. uploading material to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a violation of Copyright law. [Intellectual Property Rights Statement](#).

## Course Schedule

### Session 1: Orientations

Barash, D. P. (2013, December 15). Costa Rica's peace dividend: How abolishing the military paid off. *Los Angeles Times*. <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-barash-costa-rica-demilitarization-20131208-story.html>

"A climate change call to action from Costa Rica's former president," CBC Sunday Morning, February 29, 2023. <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/sunday/the-sunday-magazine-for-february-19-2023-1.6750481>

Martín-Baró, I., (1994). Toward a liberation psychology. In *Writings for a liberation psychology* (pg. 17-33). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

### Session 2: Towards a Psychology of Liberation

Adams, G., Dobles, I., Gómez, L. H., Kurtiş, T., & Molina, L. E. (2015). Decolonizing Psychological Science. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, 3(1), 213-238. [esp. 213-220]

Neville, H. A., Ruedas-Gracia, N., Lee, B. A., Ogunfemi, N., Maghsoodi, A. H., Mosley, D. V., ... & Fine, M. (2021). The public psychology for liberation training model: A call to transform the discipline. *American Psychologist*, 76(8), 1248-1265.

### Session 3: Settings and Environments

Comas-Díaz, L., Lykes, M. B., & Alarcón, R. D. (1998). Ethnic conflict and the psychology of liberation in Guatemala, Peru, and Puerto Rico. *American Psychologist*, 53(7), 778-791.

Dutta, U. (2016). Prioritizing the local in an era of globalization: A proposal for decentering community psychology. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 58(3-4), 329-338.

### Session 4: Prevention, Resilience, and Empowerment

Riger, S. (1993). What's wrong with empowerment?. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 21(3), 279-292.

Serrano-García, I. (2020). Resilience, coloniality, and sovereign acts: The role of community activism. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 65(1-2), 3-12.

### **Session 5: Participatory Methods**

Torre, M. E., & Ayala, J. (2009). Envisioning participatory action research entremundos. *Feminism & Psychology, 19*(3), 387-393.

Fine, M. (2016). Just methods in revolting times. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 13*(4), 347-365.

### **Session 6: Social Action**

Moane, G. (2003). Bridging the personal and the political: Practices for a liberation psychology. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 31*(1), 91-101.

Montero, M. (2009). Community action and research as citizenship construction. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 43*(1), 149-161.

### **Session 7: Accompaniment**

Lindorfer, S. (2009). In whose interest do we work? Critical comments of a practitioner at the fringes of the liberation paradigm. *Feminism & Psychology, 19*(3), 354-367.

Watkins, M. (2015). Psychosocial accompaniment. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology, 3*(1), 324-341.

### **Session 8: Indigeneity**

Gone, J. P. (2013). Redressing First Nations historical trauma: Theorizing mechanisms for indigenous culture as mental health treatment. *Transcultural Psychiatry, 50*(5), 683-706.

### **Session 9: Political Violence, Distress, and Trauma**

Straker, G. (2013). Continuous traumatic stress: Personal reflections 25 years on. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology, 19*(2), 209–217.

Hamber, B., & Palmary, I. (2021). A dance of shadows and fires: Conceptual and practical challenges of intergenerational healing after mass atrocity. *International Journal, 15*(3), 100-120.

### **Session 10: Final Reflections**

Langhout, R. D. (2015). Considering community psychology competencies: A love letter to budding scholar-activists who wonder if they have what it takes. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 55(3), 266-278.

Fernández, J. S., Sonn, C. C., Carolissen, R., & Stevens, G. (2021). Roots and routes toward decoloniality within and outside psychology praxis. *Review of General Psychology*, 25(4), 354-368.