

# SW 2CC3: Introduction to Community Practice

* Course Information
* January 11, 2021 to April 14, 2021
* This course will be a mix of asynchronous and synchronous delivery via Zoom – please see the Course Format for dates of synchronous classes (Wednesdays from 2:30 – 5:20 pm – links available on A2L)
* Instructor: Jennie Vengris
* Virtual office hours: Upon Request
* Email: [vengris@mcmaster.ca](mailto:vengris@mcmaster.ca)

# Table of Contents

[Course Overview 1](#_Toc59013823)

[Course Requirements/Assignments 4](#_Toc59013824)

[Assignment Submission and Grading 5](#_Toc59013825)

[Working Together: Student and Instructor Responsibilities 6](#_Toc59013826)

[Course Weekly Topics and Readings 9](#_Toc59013827)

# Course Overview

## Course Description:

Community practice is about harnessing the collective knowledge, strengths and energy of people to effect social change and improving the ways in which we live together. This introductory course will demonstrate that community work is important both for effecting change and supporting collective well-being.

## Course Objectives:

The objective of this course is to introduce social work and labour studies students to justice- oriented community practice. The course will explore an analysis of the theoretical underpinnings of community practice grounded in real-world examples.

By the end of this course you will be able to…

1. Identify and discuss key concepts in understanding the community and community practice
2. Demonstrate a beginning knowledge of forms of community practice including: engagement, development, organizing, advocacy and research
3. Be able to explain how communities and collectivities fit in relation to your own life and emerging community practice
4. Identify, practice and reflect on the skills necessary for effective and justice-oriented community work

The basic assumptions of this course concur with the broader curriculum context set by the **School of Social Work's Statement of Philosophy**:

*As social workers, we operate in a society characterized by power imbalances that affect us all. These power imbalances are based on age, class, ethnicity, gender identity, geographic location, health, ability, race, sexual identity and income. We see personal troubles as inextricably linked to oppressive structures. We believe that social workers must be actively involved in the understanding and transformation of injustices in social institutions and in the struggles of people to maximize control over their own lives.*

### Course Format

This class will be delivered remotely. All course material will be delivered through two platforms: Avenue to Learn (A2L) and Zoom.

Here are the details about how this class will be delivered. If you have any questions at all or if you are unclear about any elements in this course outline, please contact Jennie ([vengris@mcmaster.ca](mailto:vengris@mcmaster.ca)).

This course will include a combination of synchronous and asynchronous classes. Synchronous means that we will all gather on Zoom for part of the class and asynchronous means that you will engage with all of the course content independently.

This course will offer four topic-based modules. Each module will be covered over two weeks. For each two-week module, the first week will be synchronous and the second week will be asynchronous. We will also have a couple of synchronous sessions that offer opportunities to engage with community practitioners about their work.

Every Friday, course content will be posted to Avenue to Learn for the following week. The Avenue to Learn site is divided into weeks – everything that you need for that week will be posted in a content folder. Each week you can expect:

* + a weekly checklist (with corresponding video explaining the plan for the week)
  + links to readings/ course materials
  + outlines for assignments due that week.

Synchronous Class Weeks

For synchronous classes, course content will be posted on Friday each week (for the following week) and we meet as a group on Zoom during course time (Wednesdays from 2:30 – 5:20 pm). The Zoom link will be provided via email and A2L on the morning of our class. For most of the synchronous classes, you will have small group activities to complete for marks so attendance during the synchronous classes is very important (see details in the section on assignments in this course outline). These synchronous classes will occur on the following dates:

* + Week 1 – January 13
  + Week 2 – January 20
  + Week 4 – February 3
  + Week 6 – February 24
  + Week 7 – March 3
  + Week 9 – March 17
  + Week 11 – March 31

You will need to be available to participate in the class online during the scheduled synchronous class time.

Asynchronous Weeks

For asynchronous weeks, course content will be posted on Friday each week (for the following week). You will read/watch course materials on your own time within the week. For each of the asynchronous weeks, there is a short reflective assignment due on the Sunday of the week. The following weeks will be asynchronous:

* + Week 3
  + Week 5
  + Week 8
  + Week 10
  + Week 12

During these asynchronous weeks, there will be a voluntary (but encouraged) tutorial structured around the scenario assignment. These will happen on the Wednesdays of asynchronous weeks from 2:30 – 3:30 pm as follows:

* + Week 3 – January 27
  + Week 5 – February 10
  + Week 8 – March 10
  + Week 10 – March 24

### Required Texts:

There is no required text for this course. All required readings and course materials are available on Avenue to Learn along with links to websites.

If you have materials that you think are especially relevant to the course content, please email it to me and we will add it to an ongoing library we’re building.

# Course Requirements/Assignments

## Requirements Overview and Deadlines

1. My Understanding of Community and Community Practice
   1. From your own perspective and experience, you will write a 2-page paper (or 5 minute video) that describes your understanding of two important course concepts: community and community practice.
   2. Due: January 16, 2020
   3. Worth: 10%
2. Case Scenario Assignment (Group)
   1. In a group, you will be working together four times over the course to answer a series of questions about a case scenario provided in class (you can choose who to work with or I can assign you to a group, whichever you prefer). You will submit your responses to the questions and receive a mark as a group.
   2. Due: January 20, February 3, March 3 and March 17
   3. Worth: 10% each – 40% total
3. Integration Papers
   1. You will submit four brief papers (1 – 2 pages each; or you can choose to submit instead 5-minute videos) that integrate the full learning for each of the modules for the course.
   2. Due: January 31, February 14, March 14, March 28
   3. Worth: 7.5% each – 30% total
4. Final Reflection
   1. Reviewing your total package of assignments submitted in this course and reflecting on the presentations by practitioners who visited the class, you will write a brief (4 page) paper (or 10 – 12 minute video) that integrates all of your learning in the course.
   2. Due: April 15
   3. Worth: 20%

## Requirement/Assignment Details

Detailed outlines and rubrics are available for each assignment on Avenue to Learn. For students choosing to submit a video instead of a paper, guidance about how to do so will be offered in class.

# Assignment Submission and Grading

## Form and Style

* Written assignments must be typed and double-spaced and submitted with a front page containing the title, student’s name, student number, and the date. Number all pages (except title page).
* Video submissions must include a reference list.
* All assignments will be submitted electronically via Avenue to Learn. It is preferable to use Microsoft Word for your submissions, but you can submit them as a PDF if necessary.
* Paper format must be in accordance with the current edition of American Psychological Association (APA) publication manual.

## Avenue to Learn and Zoom

In this course, we will be using Avenue to Learn and Zoom. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss with the course instructor.

### Submitting Assignments & Grading

* All assignments should be submitted through Avenue to Learn.
* If you are unable to meet a deadline in the class, please be in touch in advance.
* The teaching team will work hard to get all marking back in two weeks.

### Minimum Grade Requirements

This course is a foundation course. Students must obtain a minimum grade of C+ in all foundation courses and a “Pass” in each placement (as well as maintain a minimum overall GPA of 6.0) in order to remain in the Social Work program.

Please see the Resources section of our [website for details on the policy regarding minimum grade requirements in foundation courses and what happens if these are not met.](https://socialwork.mcmaster.ca/resources/undergraduate-resources/minimum-grade-requirements-in-the-bsw-programs.docx/view)

### Privacy Protection

In accordance with regulations set out by the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act, the University will not allow return of graded materials by placing them in boxes in departmental offices or classrooms so that students may retrieve their papers themselves; tests and assignments must be returned directly to the student. Similarly, grades for assignments for courses may only be posted using the last five digits of the student number as the identifying data. The following possibilities exist for return of graded materials:

1. Direct return of materials to students in class;
2. Return of materials to students during office hours;
3. Students attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with assignments for return by mail;
4. Submit/grade/return papers electronically.

Arrangements for the return of assignments from the options above will be finalized during the first class.

### Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

# Working Together: Student and Instructor Responsibilities

* Students and the teaching team are expected to contribute to the creation of a respectful and constructive learning environment. Students are invited to take risks with their learning (trying out new ideas, asking for clarification) but do so in way that acknowledges the diversity of experiences and identities in the class.
* Students should be present during the weeks of synchronous learning on Zoom – having read material for the class and participating in the different ways offered.
* Please check with the instructor before using any audio or video recording devices during the synchronous classes on Zoom.

### Foundation Course Attendance:

Students are expected to attend all synchronous classes on Zoom as per the schedule in this course outline. If you anticipate difficulty with this, please speak with the instructor. Missing a substantial number of classes often results in essential course requirements not being met (these must be met to pass the course). Students who are close to missing 20% of classes must contact the instructor to discuss.

### Academic Integrity

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty, please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf)

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

* Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
* Improper collaboration in group work.
* Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations

### Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the *Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities* (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

### Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s *Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities* policy.

### Accessibility Statement

The School of Social Work recognizes that people learn and express their knowledge in different ways. We are committed to reducing barriers to accessibility in the classroom and working towards classrooms that welcome diverse learners. If you have accessibility concerns or want to talk about your learning needs, please be in touch with the course instructor.

*I am always working on my courses with Universal Design principles in mind. If you have accessibility concerns or want to talk about your learning needs, please be in touch early in the term and we can work together to put a plan in place for you to succeed in the class. You will not need to disclose any personal information in order to make a plan that works for you. If you have feedback or suggestions about Universal Design in this class, do not hesitate to reach out.*

### Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office *normally within 10 working days* of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

### Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, including lectures by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

The School of Social Work requests and expects that:

* Instructors inform students about what they will record, when they will record, and what they will do with the recording
* Students who wish to record contact the instructor first. This is so the instructor can inform the class when permission has been given to a student to record (the identity of the student will be kept confidential by the instructor).
* Recordings by students are used for personal study only, and not shared with anyone else, and are deleted when no longer needed for personal study
* There will likely be times when students or guest speakers share personal or sensitive information. In this circumstance we expect everyone to stop recording. The instructor (or student or guest sharing) may also ask for recording to stop, and we expect everyone to respect such a request.

### E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, they may not reply.

### Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

### Extensions and Incomplete Courses

Extensions

All instructors understand that life situations sometimes make it very difficult to hand in an assignment on the date it is due. If you need more time to complete an assignment, talk with your instructor – in advance of the assignment deadline! Once you and your instructor have agreed on a new due date, it is your responsibility to submit your assignment on time. If you find yourself unable to meet deadlines in more than one course, please reach out to Tammy Maikawa, Administrator ([millet@mcmaster.ca](mailto:millet@mcmaster.ca) ) or Sandra Preston, Undergraduate Chair ([prestosl@mcmaster.ca](mailto:prestosl@mcmaster.ca) ). We are here to support you to think about options (such as reducing your course load) that can take the stress off and contribute to your success in the program overall.

Incomplete courses

If you are not able to complete all of your assignments by the end of term, you have the option of contacting the instructor to request an Incomplete (INC) on the course. If the instructor agrees, (taking into account the amount of outstanding coursework and the time it will likely take to complete), the instructor will enter the grade you have so far in the course (the default grade) and the course will appear in Mosaic as INC (incomplete).

The School’s requirements for completing courses depend on a) the nature of the course (whether it is a foundation course\*, or a social and political context course) and b) when you are hoping to start placement. For example, a student who has an incomplete in a foundation course cannot start placement. Please see the [Policy on Extensions and Incompletes in the BSW Program](https://socialwork.mcmaster.ca/resources/general-school-policies/policy-on-extensions-and-incompletes-october-2017.pdf) for more details.

At approximately 52-60 days after the end of term, the Mosaic system will automatically change an INC to the default grade. Depending on the default grade, this might affect your standing or progress in the program.

*As always, if you have any questions or concerns about your progress in the program, please connect with Tammy Maikawa, Administrator (*[*millet@mcmaster.ca*](mailto:millet@mcmaster.ca) *) or Sandra Preston, Undergraduate Chair (*[*prestosl@mcmaster.ca*](mailto:prestosl@mcmaster.ca)*).*

# Course Weekly Topics and Readings

## Week 1: Synchronous (Meet via Zoom on January 13 at 2:30 pm)

### Topics:

* Intro to the Course
* Intro to Communities

### Readings:

* None

## Week 2: Synchronous (Meet via Zoom on January 20 at 2:30 pm)

### Topics:

* Module 1 – Context of Community Practice
* Part 1 – Individualism and The Neoliberal Context – The Case for Collectivities
  + Lecture and Group Work

### Readings:

* Baskin, C. (2016). Chapter Eight: The Answers are in the Community. In Strong Helpers’ Teachings (pp.155 – 168). Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars Press
* Chimamanda, N. (October 2009). The Danger of the Single Story. TED Talk. Find it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Ihs241zeg>
* Lazarovic, S. (2019). This is How Borrowing Things From Our Neighbors Strengthens Society. Yes! Magazine. <https://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/dirt/community-relationships-borrowing-from-neighbors-strengthens-democracy-20190318>

## Week 3: Asynchronous

### Topics:

* Module 1 – Context of Community Practice
* Part 2 – The Context of Community Work and Social Work Practice
  + Readings, Tutorial and Individual Reflection

### Readings:

* Benjamin, A. (2012). Afterword: Doing Anti-Oppressive Social Work: The Importance of Resistance, History and Strategy. In Baines, D. (Ed.) Doing Anti-Oppressive Practice: Social Justice Social Work. (pp. 289 – 297). Blackpoint, NS: Fernwood Publishing.
* Selection from Imarisha, W., & brown a. m. (Eds.) (2015). *Octavia’s brood: Science fiction stories from social justice movements.* Chico, CA: AK Press.

## Week 4: Synchronous (Meet via Zoom on February 3 at 2:30 pm)

### Topics:

* Module 2 – Community Practice Approaches
* Part 1 – Organizing, Development and Research
  + Lecture and Group Work

### Readings:

* Austin, M., Coombs, M., Barr, B. (2005). Community-Centered Clinical Practice: Is the Integration of Micro and Macro Social Work Practice Possible? *Journal of Community Practice*, 13(4), 9 – 30.

## Week 5: Asynchronous

### Topics:

* Module 2 – Community Practice Approaches
* Part 2 – Putting the Approaches into Practice
  + Readings, Tutorial and Individual Reflection

### Readings:

* Todd, S. & Savard, S. (2020). Canadian Perspectives on Community Development (pp. 1 – 10). University of Ottawa Press.
* Choose one of seven readings/videos/podcasts to explore an example of community practice (available on A2L)

## Week 6: Synchronous (Meet via Zoom on February 24 at 2:30 pm)

### Topics:

* Community Practitioner Panel

### Readings:

* Carroll, J. & Minkler, M. (2000). Freire’s Message for Social Workers: Looking Back, Looking Ahead. Journal of Community Practice, 8(1), 21 – 36.

## Week 7: Synchronous (Meet via Zoom on March 3 at 2:30 pm)

### Topics:

* Module 3 – Equity, Power and Self Reflexive Practice
* Part 1 – Power, Equity and Positionality in Community Work
  + Lecture and Group Work

### Readings:

* IMPSO - Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Movement Ottawa. (2012). Harsha Walia on Anti-Oppression, Decolonization, and Responsible Allyship. YouTube Video. Find it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGqhgRr66ng>

## Week 8: Asynchronous

### Topics:

* Module 3 – Self Reflexive Praxis
* Part 2 – Self-Reflection in Community Practice
  + Readings, Tutorial and Individual Reflection

### Readings:

* Reynolds, V. (2011). Resisting burnout with justice-doing. The International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work, 4, 27 – 45.
* Mingus, M. (2012). On Collaboration: Starting with Each Other. Find it here: <https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2012/08/03/on-collaboration-starting-with-each-other/>

## Week 9: Synchronous (Meet via Zoom on March 17 at 2:30 pm)

### Topics:

* Module 4 – Roles and Skills for Community Practice
* Part 1 – Roles and Skills Overview
  + Lecture and Group Work

### Readings:

* Seeds for Change. Facilitating Workshops. (Date Unknown). Find it on Avenue to Learn.

## Week 10: Asynchronous

### Topics:

* Module 4 – Roles and Skills for Community Practice
* Part 1 – Skills
  + Readings, Tutorial and Individual Reflection

### Readings:

* Lopes, T & Thomas, B. (2006). Dancing on Live Embers: Challenging Racism in Organizations (pp. 51 – 68). Between the Lines Publishing.
* Meslin, D. (2010, October). Antidote to Apathy. TED Talk. Find it here: <http://www.ted.com/talks/dave_meslin_the_antidote_to_apathy>

## Week 11: Synchronous (Meet via Zoom on March 31 at 2:30 pm)

### Topics:

* Transforming Stories, Driving Change

### Readings:

* Watch Recorded Performance (available on A2L)
* Costa, L. et al. (2012). Recovering our Stories: A Small Act of Resistance. *Studies in Social Justice*, 6(1). 85 – 101.

## Week 12: Asynchronous

### Topics:

* Wrap Up
* Reviewing the Final Assignment

### Readings:

* None