

# SW 2CC3: Introduction to Community Practice

Course Information:

* January 9 to April 12, 2023, Wednesdays, 2:30-5:20 p.m.
* Instructor: Jennie Vengris
* In-person office hours: Wednesdays 12:30 – 1:30 pm
* Virtual office hours: Upon Request
* Email: [vengris@mcmaster.ca](mailto:vengris@mcmaster.ca)
* Office: KTH 314

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# 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

Each class will run for three hours on Wednesday afternoons from 2:30p.m. – 5:20 p.m. Most weeks will be structured as follows:

* 2:30 – 4:00 pm – Lecture and small/large group discussion on an identified topic, linked to the readings. This will cover theoretical perspectives, issues of power and equity, skills and roles and community work practices.
* 4:00 – 5:20 pm – Group work

There may be some weeks that do not follow this format. The lectures will not be traditional – they will be interspersed with paired and small group discussions, large group discussions and other activities. Students are expected to actively engage in class. We will have guest speakers throughout the term. If you have any ideas about who you would like to see or perspectives represented in our guest speakers, please email Jennie.

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)).

### 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 Early Understanding of Course Concepts – PART 1
   1. From your own perspective and experience, you will write a 3-page paper (or 5 - 7 minute video) that describes your understanding of two important course concepts: community, collective care, and community practice.
   2. Due: January 20, 2023
   3. Worth: 20%
2. Community Practice Analysis (Group Assignment)
   1. Over four weeks, your group will your group will focus on a different community practice dilemma from Lee + Todd and answer a series of discussion questions. You will submit your discussion notes. The first two will be marked and the latter two will be marked together.
   2. Due: February 1, February 15, March 8, March 22
   3. Worth: 35% (30% from instructor and 5% from self-evaluation – completed in-class on April 5)
3. Participation in Community Care Event
   1. Students will be asked to work individually, in pairs or small groups to plan a community care activity for an in-class event at the end of March.
   2. Due: March 29, 2023
   3. Worth: 5%
4. My Parting Understanding of Course Concepts – PART 2
   1. From your own perspective and experience, you will write a 6-page paper (or 10 - 15 minute video/audio recording) that reflects on your early understanding of three important course concepts: community, collective care, and community practice and how this understanding shifted, changed, or was confirmed through the class.
   2. Due: April 18, 2023
   3. Worth: 40%

## 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, potentially, 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 class – it’s a much richer learning environment if you have read material for the class and participate in the different ways offered.
* Please check with the instructor before using any audio or video recording devices during the class.

### Foundation Course Attendance:

Students are expected to attend all classes 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. Universal Design in Learning is about creating the conditions in a course for a range of different learners so that students don’t need to access a different individual accommodations to succeed. 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”.

*I don’t actually require students to use the MSAF process – if you anticipate that you will miss an assignment because of illness or another reason, please be in touch.*

### 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 Jennie Vengris, Undergraduate Chair ([vengris@mcmaster.ca](mailto:vengris@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 Jennie Vengris, Undergraduate Chair (*[*vengris@mcmaster.ca*](mailto:vengris@mcmaster.ca) *).*

# Course Weekly Topics and Readings

## Week 1 – January 11

### Topics:

* Intro to the Course
* Intro to Communities and Community Practice

### Readings:

* None

## Week 2: January 18

### Topics:

* + Context of Community Practice

### Readings:

* Baskin, C. (2016). Chapter Eight: The Answers are in the Community. In Strong Helpers’ Teachings (pp.155 – 168). Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars Press
* 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>
* 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.

## Week 3: January 25

### Topics:

* + Defining ‘Community’

Readings:

* Adichie, C. (October 2009). The Danger of the Single Story. TED Talk. Find it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Ihs241zeg>
* 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 4: February 1

Topics:

* Community Work and Social Work – Bridging Micro and Macro

### 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.
* Gray, M. (2011). Back to Basics: A Critique of the Strengths Perspective in Social Work*. Families in Society, 92(1)*. 5 – 11.

## Week 5: February 8

### Topics:

* + Community Practice Approaches

Readings:

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

## Week 6: February 15

### Topics:

* Collective Care and Critical Hope

### Readings:

* Reynolds, V. (2011). Resisting burnout with justice-doing. The International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work, 4, 27 – 45.
* Reese, R. (2017). Self Care is Radical. <https://www.ted.com/talks/raymonda_reese_self_care_is_radical>
* Editorial Committee. (2016). Who Cares? The Politics of Care in Radical Organizing. Upping the Anti – a journal of theory and action. <https://uppingtheanti.org/journal/article/18-editorial>

Mid-Term Recess: Feb 20 – Feb 26

## Week 7: March 1

### Topics:

* + Equity, Power, and Self-Reflective Practice

### 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>
* Fook, J. (2017). The Challenges of Creating Critically Reflective Groups. *Social Work with Groups, 35*(1). 218 – 234
* Sins Invalid. (2021). ASL Vlog of 10 Principles of Disability Justice. YouTube Video. Find it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTE42livhQg>

## Week 8: March 8

### 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 9: March 15

### Topics:

* + Roles and Skills in Community Practice

### Readings:

* Lopes, T & Thomas, B. (2006). Dancing on Live Embers: Challenging Racism in Organizations (pp. 51 – 68). Between the Lines Publishing.
* Knight, C. & Gitterman, A. (2017). Merging Micro and Macro Intervention: Social Work Practice With Groups in the Community. *Journal of Social Work Education, 54*(1), 3 – 17.

## Week 10: March 22

### Topics:

* + Case Study – A Community Pantry (integrate grassroots, mutual aid)

### Readings:

* A package of materials will be uploaded to A2L
* Democracy Now! (2020). Solidarity Not Charity: Mutual Aid & How to Organize in the Age of Coronavirus. Find it here: <https://www.democracynow.org/2020/3/20/coronavirus_community_response_mutual_aid>

## Week 11: March 29

### Topics:

* + Community Care Class-Led Event

### Readings:

* No readings
* You will be asked to help plan and contribute to a community care event for the School of Social Work

## Week 12: April 5

### Topics:

* + Course Concepts Debrief
  + Group Work
  + Class Potluck

### Readings:

* No readings but this is a great opportunity to catch up on readings so that you can write an excellent final paper!

## Week 13: April 12

### Topics:

* + Wrap Up

### Readings:

* No readings