

# **CRD/GEO 240: Community Development Theory**

CRN: 27325/ 35611

Fall 2023

Mondays 2:10-6:00PM

166 Hunt Hall

**Professor:** Jonathan K London

**Office hours:** Thursdays 3:00-5:00pm or by  
appointment

**\*\*Please note this syllabus is a guide and subject to change. Changes will be communicated via course announcements, in class, and by Canvas mail.**

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Community development supports community participation in and influence of important public and private functions including planning, governance, economic development, health and social services provision, responses to poverty, effective transportation, housing for all groups, and improved education and human resources. Changes in community practices over the last few decades have given increasing importance to region-wide collaboration, complex partnerships, and new forms of public- private organization. Similarly, the projects that community organizations are involved in are vastly more complex than those of even a few years ago, requiring networks that encompass technical, financial, legal, and social services expertise.

Effective community development practice requires critical reflection on the social, political, economic, environmental, and historical processes and structures that shape the distribution of opportunities, resources, and risks in and across communities. This critical analysis can be facilitated by applying generalizable understandings of these social phenomena, a.k.a. theory.

Theory is not just "academic." It is a tool to both critically understand the world and to inform effective-- and generally collaborative-- action to change it. We all theorize when we ask questions about why the world is as it is and what can be done to improve our lives and others. The dynamics between theory and action is called "praxis. We will be building our capacity to engage in critical praxis through critical and constructive readings, writing, and dialogue.

Reflective community development practitioners and scholars should understand the following elements of community development:

- the nature of community groups and social solidarities,

- the nature and structures of power in society,
- the function of nonprofit and other community organizations,
- the ways services (e.g. social, environmental, economic) are provided,
- the networks that tie community groups to each other in their local area, the region and the

## COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Provide an opportunity for students to explore, develop, and apply an interdisciplinary set of theories relevant to the professional and academic fields of community and regional development.
2. Help build a critical understanding of different theoretical approaches, link development techniques to theory and vice-versa, and consider examples of community development institutions, organizations, projects and practices.
3. Facilitate a critical examination of the strengths and limits of community development in the context of broader social changes efforts.
4. Support refining your personal approach to community development as well as the topics and directions you wish to pursue professionally.

## GRADING & EVALUATION

**Weekly Abstracts (30%)** Starting the second week of class, each student will prepare an integrative abstract and questions on required readings that will be available to all class members prior to our weekly meeting. These are to be written in your own words. Distribution will be through the class Canvas page DISCUSSIONS section.

- *Integrative abstracts* should attempt to identify key issues and ideas in the weekly readings but strive to go beyond mere synopsis of the material, which we all will have read.
- The goal, instead, is to *integrate* the information, which can take a variety of formats.
- You might do this by focusing on conclusions and implications and/or by raising a paradox or central question about the topic of the readings.
- Integrative abstracts should treat strengths and weaknesses of the material, as well as make connections to other topics we have covered.
- Students can comment on whether the author's evidence really supports what they set out to do and the conclusions they reach.
- All submissions should include a minimum of two discussion questions related to the readings: One should be a lingering question for you, and the other a question that will promote class discussion.
- If you wish, you may include questions that identify issues that are unclear, undeveloped, difficult to interpret, or which are particularly interesting such that further discussion and elaboration by the class is warranted.
- Both abstracts and questions will be used to orient class discussions.
- These abstracts should be relatively short; approximately 2 pages using standard margins, regular size font (12 point), and double spaced (though it is entirely plausible to accomplish the objectives in less space).

- Students will submit six integrative abstracts throughout the semester, worth 5 points each. The abstracts are due 2by Sunday at 5pm). I will grade only the first six abstracts you submit; you may not submit more than six to replace poor scores.

**Class Discussion & Participation (15%)** The portion of your grade is comprised of performance in class discussion, including the class you lead. Members of the class will sign up to lead class discussion (you will sign up electronically, stay tuned). Class discussion leaders are expected to combine their own reading of the material with insights gained from the summaries and questions submitted by other class members to create a coherent agenda for class discussion. Each of you will lead discussion once or twice during the quarter. The responsibilities of the discussion leader are to facilitate the fruitful discussion of readings, introduce connections to earlier topics, incorporate questions individuals might have, and ensure there are no lulls during class. The latter—ensuring there are no lulls in discussion—is the most important role of the discussion leader. Thus, be sure to prepare a list of thoughtful questions for discussion. Leading class discussion does NOT require a student to lecture on the topic or the readings. The discussion leader carefully reads and reviews the commentaries and questions from the other students in the class. They organize the questions from the students in the class by looking for similarities and grouping the questions into categories. They then lead the class in discussion the questions. The discussion leaders are NOT responsible for finding the one and only correct answer to the questions. I will begin each class period with a brief preamble to introduce broad topics of discussion, treat the themes of the readings, and relate to the foundational aspects of other work considered. The discussion leader(s) will pick up from there to procure a fruitful discussion of the material.

For example, a good rule of thumb is to apply the following; 1) a brief thematic overview of the readings, 2) the main arguments and most valuable contributions (not a summary) of the readings, 3) an analyses of these arguments relate to (expand upon/ reframe/ contradict) other course readings, 4) critiques of the readings (where are their arguments thin, what do they miss, how could they be strengthened, 5) several key questions or debates to frame the class discussion. This should total about 15 minutes. Providing interactive activities (e.g., free writing, small group discussions etc. are also welcome throughout the class session). The emphasis of the class is on interactive discussion, not presentation by the facilitators.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Points are deducted if you fail to come to class prepared to contribute to discussion. That is, if you are found to be disengaged, inattentive, and/or distracting during class (or if you fail to come to class), your class discussion grade will be reduced.

This is an opportunity to exercise your intellectual autonomy. To this end you may want to incorporate related information from current, relevant media. You will be evaluated individually on the clarity and accuracy with which you discuss the readings and as a group, on the extent to which you facilitate class participation and understanding. The point of this assignment is to give you experience planning and leading a seminar. I encourage you to be creative and have fun with the assignment and you are welcome to meet with me beforehand for any assistance I may be able to offer.

- **Be organized;** you should prepare an outline of how you want to structure the class discussion and have a list of topics and questions.
- Here are some suggestions for approaches that have worked well in the past.
  - To begin, brief presentations of salient points, which can be done with a list of questions/topics/unresolved issues that you plan to address.
  - **Make connections.** Draw on current events, media representations, and your own special knowledge to move the discussion in certain directions.
  - Your presentation should bridge what we have already read with the current set of readings. Multimedia, film, etc. may be used. Refreshments are always welcomed.

**Final Paper & Presentation (50%)** The final paper will be a theoretically-informed community development case study. This can focus on a place, organization, population, or subject matter of your own choice. The goal of the activity is to help you hone your analytical skills and provide you with experience reading and synthesizing material and then presenting it in a cogent and persuasive way to readers. In this sense, the organization or problem is secondary to honing your analytical and writing skills. The paper assignment has three phases:

1. **The Paper Proposal:** 1500 words (10 points) Due via Canvas by 11:59 pm **October 31st**. In it you will describe the community development project or process you would like to examine for your final paper. Why is it a valuable case study for understanding community development? Why is it meaningful to you? What are the main theoretical ideas and key sources you will use to analyze the case?
2. **The Draft Paper:** 2,000-3,000 words, not including bibliography (not graded) Due on Canvas by 11:59 pm **November 21**. This draft will present the case study and the key theoretical ideas used to analyze it and the results of your preliminary analysis. Some sections may be in detailed bullet form if necessary. Include a bibliography of sources. You will peer review a colleague's paper and get peer review feedback on the draft. Submit feedback by 11:59 pm **November 21**
3. **Final paper:** 5,000 words, not including bibliography (25 points). Due by 11:59pm **December 7**. (No Late Papers without an official excuse)
4. **Final presentation:** (5 points) A 10-minute final presentation on the key points of your paper: the theoretical framework, the case study and the analysis of the case study using the framework. Make sure to practice before presenting!

**Peer review of colleague's paper (10%)** Final paper drafts will be exchanged on Canvas on **November 28 by Noon**. Each student will be responsible for reviewing one other student's paper. These reviews are due on Canvas by **November 30th by 2PM**. Review using electronic methods (e.g., track changes in Word) or paper (written comments) is acceptable.

Your paper should include the following **structure**.

- The Introduction presents the overview of the paper: main topic or problem to be explored, key questions, major theories, identification of case
- Theoretical framework: What are key ideas, key writers, important debates in the field?
- Case Study: place/ historical context, key community development organizations and processes, key actors, outcomes.

- Discussion: Use your selected theories help you analyze your case study and the key community development issues this case can help
- Conclusions: What are the policy/ action implications, what are some limitations of your study, what are suggested areas of future research?
- References: APA-Style

Your final paper will be graded on the following criteria:

- How well defined is your research question?
- The choice of a good case study is always critical: Why is it important?
- Does it shed light on a class of objects, in this case organizations?
- How well do you use theory to develop an analytical framework?
- Is the paper logical and do you use substantive arguments?
- Do you evaluate your citations and sources critically?
- How well written is the paper?

All quotations, whether from interviews or other written material, must be in quotation marks and referenced. Please use the APA style guide to format in-text citations and references.

**Grading.** Grades are determined on a traditional academic scale.

A 93-100%    B+ 87-89%    C+ 77-79%    D+ 67-69%    F 0-59%

A- 90-92%    B 83-86%    C 73-76%    D 63-66%

B- 80-82%    C- 70-72%    D- 60-62%

**Required class materials.** Will be available on canvas or by using the library website to access journal articles.

**AN IMPORTANT WORD ABOUT GRADING:** Grades are earned, not given. Simply completing the course requirements does not entitle a student to a grade of A or B. “A” grades are earned for exceptional work. Requests for reconsideration of grades will be accepted only in writing with a clear statement of what the student believes has been mis-graded within one week of receiving the graded material. Please submit your original full assignment along with your request for grade reconsideration.

## **General Course Policies**

**Attendance & Participation.** Students are expected to complete all the coursework. Attending lectures and participating in classroom activities are essential to your success in this course. You are responsible for all announcements and instructions provided in class, regardless of how you access the material.

**Email responses.** I respond to emails within 48 hours sent during regular business days/ hours. Please put CRD 240 in the subject line. Please feel free to follow up if you don't receive response in this period.

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES & RESOURCES

**Americans with Disabilities Act for Students with Special Needs Statement.** Any students with disabilities or other special needs, who need special accommodations in this course, are invited to share these concerns or requests with the instructor and contact [UC Davis Student Disability Center](#) for disability access. Students who have, or suspect they may have, a disability should seek services through Disability Services. Students must be registered with Disability Services and receive written authorization to obtain disability-related accommodations.

**Code of Academic Conduct.** The Code of Academic Conduct applies to all undergraduate students, full-time, and part-time, at UC Davis. UC Davis expects and requires behavior compatible with its high standards of scholarship. By accepting admission to the university, a student accepts its regulations (i.e., [Code of Academic Conduct](#)) and acknowledges the right of the university to take disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion, for conduct judged unsatisfactory or disruptive. Please note all students must acknowledge their classroom responsibilities by going to <https://participate.ucdavis.edu/Links to an external site>. no later than the quarter add deadline.

**Plagiarism.** With all the materials that you use, be sure to cite the source. Note that plagiarism includes the direct lifting of text and re-stating of arguments without citation from texts in any language, not just English. If you use a website, include the URL and the date you accessed it. Cutting and pasting from a website that is not acknowledged is plagiarism. Students caught plagiarizing will be referred to Student Judicial Affairs and receive a "zero" for the assignment. For additional information on what constitutes plagiarism, see [here](#). Students may not post course materials, including but not limited to assignments or exam questions to internet services such as Chegg. Uploading and/or use of these materials is considered academic misconduct and will be reported to [OSSJA Links to an external site](#).

**Title IX.** Title IX prohibits gender discrimination, including sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. If you have experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence, you can receive confidential support and advocacy from the Center for Advocacy, Resources, and Education (CARE) at [ucdcare@ucdavis.edu](mailto:ucdcare@ucdavis.edu) or 530.752.3299. In addition, Student Health and Counseling Services (SHCS) provides confidential counseling to all students and can be reached 24/7 at 530.752.2349. You can also report sexual violence or sexual harassment directly to the University's Title IX Coordinator at [wjdelmendo@ucdavis.edu](mailto:wjdelmendo@ucdavis.edu) or 530.752.9466. Reports to law enforcement can be made to the UCD Police Department at 530.752.2677. More information on UC Davis sexual violence prevention and response resources can be found at <http://sexualviolence.ucdavis.edu/>.

**Mandatory Reporting.** Faculty and TAs are required under the UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment to inform the Title IX Coordinator should they become aware that you or any other student has experienced sexual violence or sexual harassment. There are other

confidential and anonymous resources for you if you do not want your experience to be mandatorily reported. Please see Resources for UC Davis students on our Canvas course site.

**[Resources for UC Davis Students.](#)** This list is prepared by the Center for Educational Effectiveness.

**Wellness statement.** Academic life can be overwhelming at times, but know that you are not alone if you're feeling stressed. For many of us, systems of oppression such as racism, sexism, heterosexism or cissexism, document status, may cause additional stress. Please remember to practice self-care and reach out for support if and when you need it. You can also visit [Virtual UC Davis](#) to find resources related to health and well-being, academics, basic needs (food and housing) and more.