

## Course Title

# Community Psychology

## Course Number

# APSY-UE 9005

## Instruction Mode: Blended

## Fall 2022

If you are enrolled in this course 100% remotely and are not a Go Local/Study Away student for NYU [SITE], please make sure that you've completed the online academic orientation via Brightspace so you are aware of site specific support structure, policies and procedures. Please contact [ALIAS OR EMAIL] if you have trouble accessing the Brightspace site.

**Syllabus last updated on: 04/08/2022**

### Lecturer Contact Information

- Professor Charity S. Akotia
- Lecture Venue: Room 2, NYU Accra Centre, Labone.
- Contact Phone No:
- Office Hours: By Appointment
- Email:

### Units earned

4 Credits

### Course Details

- Meeting days and time: **Wednesdays, 9 am to 12:00 noon GMT**
- All times are GMT
- Remote Participants: I will provide you with the Zoom link
- COVID-related details: In the interest of protecting the NYU Accra community, we are closely following CDC guidance around COVID-19 and adjusting our recommendations and policies accordingly. Your health and well-being is our top priority.
  - If you are attending in person, you will be assigned a seat on the first day and are expected to use that seat for the entire semester due to NYU COVID-19 safety protocol. Please note that you are expected to attend every class meeting in-person; however, this may change during the drop/add period if in-person student registration increases significantly or at any point during the semester if local COVID-19 regulations require additional physical distancing.

- Additionally, in-person students will be split into cohorts who will attend sessions.

## **Course Description**

Community psychology is a sub-field of psychology that is concerned with person-environment interactions and the ways in which society impacts on individual and community functioning. This course will introduce students to the field of community psychology with emphasis on theory and methods of community psychology within the context of the psychosocial needs of the Ghanaian society. We will focus on people's strengths and competencies, not just their deficits and pathology. Topics include: the history of community psychology; doing community research; prevention and health promotion; sense of community, stress and coping in context, empowerment, and social and community change. In addition, we will explore some contemporary social problems globally and in the Ghanaian socio-cultural context. Students will be encouraged to develop social and community interventions to help reduce these problems.

## **Course Objective**

**Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:**

- discuss the values and principles of community psychology and how they differ from other subfields of psychology
- explain how community psychologists conduct research
- discuss the effects of societal, cultural and environmental influences on psychological and community well-being
- analyze the relationship between people and their environments and consider ways of improving this relationship
- design innovative programs geared towards prevention of social and community, and
- organize citizen participation and social change in communities

## **Assessment Components**

You are expected to attend class in person or remote synchronously. Failure to submit or fulfill any required component may result in failure of the class, regardless of grades achieved in other assignments.

## **Class Participation**

You are expected to participate in all class discussions. You should read the assigned readings before class and be ready to contribute to class discussions based on the readings. Additionally, you should also share your observations, personal experiences, etc, with the class if need be.

## **Reaction Paper**

You are expected to write a reaction paper to any one of the guest lecture presentations in the semester. Your paper should be 3 – 4 page long. In these paper, you should first summarize the presentation, and then attempt to answer the following questions:

- What were the most important revelations or insights for you?

- What touched you most about the topic?
- What questions do you now have about the topic?
- What is your final thought about the topic that was presented?

Send your reaction paper to my email address ([csa5@nyu.edu](mailto:csa5@nyu.edu)) on the due date.

## Issue Paper

You will be expected to write one issue paper on any of the assigned readings (from Session 1 to 5). In this paper, I expect you to first summarize the paper and indicate what new things you have learnt after reading the paper and how you think the paper could have been improved (for example, what did you expect to read about the topic that was not included?). Your paper should be 3 – 4 pages long. Send your reaction papers to my email address ([csa5@nyu.edu](mailto:csa5@nyu.edu)) on the due date.

## Class Test

There will be one class test as scheduled in the course syllabus. The format for the class test will be announced in class but will mainly be short answers.

## Class Presentation

You will be expected to select a social or community problem that constitutes a psychological challenge and present in class. In preparing your slides for the presentation, you will be expected to do a literature search on the topic, and as much as possible situate it within the local context. You should build one or two discussion questions into your presentation. Whether the presentation will be done individually or in groups will depend on the class size. This will be discussed further in class.

## Problem Definition paper (6 - 8 pages)

Each student is expected to write a paper on a social/community problem that is relevant to community psychology. In this paper, you should define and/or redefine a problem that you have identified in your "community". You should do a thorough review of the literature focusing on the problem as well as what is being done to address it. You will be expected to discuss the problem making use of community psychology concepts, issues and philosophies and provide a critique of the various efforts and interventions that have been designed to address the problem.

## Outline of the paper:

- State the problem (highlight the various social, community and individual effects (e.g. who is affected and how are they affected, why is it a problem, etc)
- What are the possible causes of the problem? (Discuss the causes at multiple ecological levels).
- Review the literature on the chosen problem, with emphasis on what is being done to address it
- What innovative solutions/interventions do you have for the problem (considering the ecological nature of the problem). In other words, plan an intervention for the problem.
- Emphasize prevention and empowerment-oriented efforts in your intervention.

**In awarding marks for your written papers, the instructor takes into account the quality as well as the content of your work:**

- Clarity of writing, organization of ideas/arguments with supporting evidence, synthesis of information, critical analysis and a conclusion that ties the major ideas of the paper together.
- Use legible font styles such as Times New Roman or Arial. Referencing must follow APA standard. All work cited must properly be referenced at the end of the document. Citations for direct quotes and paraphrasing must be provided. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Avoid jargons, and acronyms must be written in full. Proofread for typographical errors before submitting.

<b>Assignments/Activities</b>	<b>% of Final Grade</b>	<b>Due</b>
Class Participation	10%	-
Issue Paper	10%	Oct 5
Class Test	20%	Oct 19
Reaction Paper	20%	Nov 2/ Nov 30
Class Presentation	20%	Nov 16
Problem Definition Paper	20%	Dec 14

## **Teaching & Learning Philosophy**

My basic philosophy of teaching is that students and learners do not come to class as blank slates. On the contrary, they come to class with several notions of the discipline they are studying. These notions or preconceived ideas may be false and overgeneralized. It is therefore my responsibility as a teacher to acknowledge this and to provide students with a well-informed view of what I teach. My aim therefore is to challenge their preconceived ideas and create an enabling environment for them to explore and engage as much as possible. I bring to class a lot of practical examples of everyday life experiences that help students decongest their preconceived ideas. Additionally, knowing that students bring preconceived ideas into the classroom, I aim to invite them to make use of their own life experiences when in class. I utilize their life experiences to discuss psychological concepts and principles and also bring in knowledge from research to contextualize discussions and demonstrate how psychologists scientifically explore issues.

I have observed throughout my several years of teaching that when students are engaged in class, they will begin to think critically and ask questions proactively. As part of my teaching philosophy, I also believe that learning occurs best in a collaborative manner. In my view, students do not only learn from me or from each other but that I also learn from them. I believe in openness in the classroom and also allowing students to bring in ideas they have on topics discussed in class. As I share my objectives with them, students come to understand how invested I am in them and that as a teacher, I am a source of support to them.

### Required Text(s)

Electronic Resources (via Brightspace / NYU Library Course Reserves)

Kloos, B., Hill, J., Thomas, E., Wandersman, A., Elias, M. J., & Dalton, J. H. (2012). *Community psychology: Linking individuals and communities*. New York: Wadsworth.

### Supplemental Text

Nelson, G., & Prilleltensky, I. (2010). *Community Psychology: In pursuit of liberation and well-being* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). Palgrave MacMillan.

### \*\*\*Session 1 – Make- Up Day

\*\*\*Friday, 02/09/2022

**Introduction and overview of community psychology** (This will introduce students to the field of community psychology, its historical development, scope, values and guided principles as well as the roles performed by community psychologists)

Kloos et al. Chapter 1

Akotia, C. S., & Barimah, K. B. (2007). History of Community Psychology in Ghana. In S. M. Reich, M. Riemer, I. Prilleltensky, & M. Montero (eds.). *International Community Psychology. History and Theories*. Springer

### Session 2 07/09/2022

**Doing Community Research** (This session introduces the students to how community research is conducted, strengths and challenges, etc)

Kloos et al. Chapter 4

Baum, F., MacDougall, C., & Smith, D. (2006). Participatory action research, *Journal of Epidemiological Community Health*, 2006;60:854–857.doi: 10.1136/jech.2004.028662

### Session 3 14/09/2022

**Understanding Individuals within Environments**

(This session highlights the importance of using ecological approach in understanding communities. Various ecological models will be discussed and their implications for community and social intervention will be highlighted)

Kloos et al., Chapter 5

**Session 4**    **21/09/2022**

**Public Holiday – No class**

**Session 5**    **28/09/2022**

**Understanding communities**

(In this session, students will be introduced to the various types of communities, sense of community and its importance in building communities. It will also discuss how psychological sense of community can be promoted in a setting)

Kloos et al., Chapter 6

Volker, B., Flap, H., & Lindenberg, S (2007). When Are Neighbourhoods Communities? Community in Dutch Neighbourhoods. *European Sociological Review*, 23(1), 99–114.

Mckenzie, K. (2008). Urbanization, social capital and mental health. *Global Social Policy* 8(3), 359–377

**Session 6**    **05/10/2022**

**Community Mental Health (Stress and Coping)**

(This lecture focuses on the dynamics of stress and coping in context. Emphasis will be placed on the cultural context of coping and community resources available for coping. Implications for intervention will also be discussed)

Kloos et al., Chapter 8

Greif, M, J., & Doodoo, F. N. (2015). How community physical, structural, and social stressors relate to mental health in the urban slums of Accra, Ghana, *Health and Place*, 33, 57 -66.

**Assignment due: Issue paper**

**Session 7**    **12/10/2022**

Prevention and Health Promotion

Kloos et al., Chapter 9

Duplaga et al, (2016). Scoping review of health promotion and disease prevention interventions addressed to elderly people. *BMC Health Services Research*, 278 <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-016-1521-4>.

**Session 8 19/10/2022**

Class Test

**Session 9 26/10/2022**

Culture and mental health in Ghana: Meaning, practices, treatment and prevention

**Guest lecture**

**Session 10 02/11/2022**

**Field Trip**

(On this day, the class will visit a community facility, usually an NGO that works to improve lives in the community. Students are expected to learn about the activities of the NGO and analyze how the principles of community psychology are incorporated into these settings)

Assignment due      **Reaction paper 1**

**Session 11 09/11/2022**

**Program Evaluation and Program Development**

(In this session, we will discuss the various types of program evaluation, reasons for doing evaluation research and how to develop community and social programs)

Kloos et al. Chapter 13

**Session 12 16/11/2022**

**Class Presentations**

**Session 13 23/11/2022**

The dynamics of domestic violence in Ghana

**Guest lecture**

Doku, D. T., & Oppong Asante K. (2015). Women' approval of domestic physical violence against wives. Analysis of the Ghana demographic health survey, *BMC Women's Health*, 15 (1), 120.

## **Session 14 30/11/2022**

### **Citizen participation and empowerment**

(We will explore citizen participation and empowerment. Benefits of citizen participation and strengths of empowered communities will be emphasized)

Kloos et al. Chapter 11

Sipsma, H., Ofori-Attah, A., Canavan, M., Udry, C., & Bradley, E. (2014). Empowerment and use of antenatal care among women in Ghana: A cross sectional study. *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth*, 14, 364.

Assignment due: **Reaction Paper 2**

## **Session 15 07/12/2022**

Organizing for Community and Social Change

## **Session 16 14/12/2022**

### **Overview of the course**

Assignment due      **Problem Definition Paper**

### **Classroom Etiquette**

To optimize the experience in a blended learning environment, please consider the following:

- Please be mindful of your microphone and video display during synchronous class meetings. Ambient noise and some visual images may disrupt class time for you and your peers.
- Please do not eat during class and minimize any other distracting noises (e.g. rustling of papers and leaving the classroom before the break, unless absolutely necessary).
- If you are not using your cell phone to follow the lesson, cell phones should be turned off or in silent mode during class time.
- Make sure to let your classmates finish speaking before you do.
- If deemed necessary by the study away site (ie COVID related need), synchronous class sessions may be recorded and archived for other students to view. This will be announced at the beginning of class time.
- Students should be respectful and courteous at all times to all participants in class.

[Enter further classroom etiquette if applicable; if, for example, it is not permitted to use laptops for note taking, please add the following clause: "Exceptions will be made for students with academic accommodations from the Moses Center." You may also want to tell your students if and how they should signal to you that they would like to speak.]



### Suggested Co-Curricular Activities

[Enter suggested voluntary co-curricular activities]

### Your Lecturer

Charity S. Akotia is Professor at the Department of Psychology, University of Ghana. I received a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Psychology from the University of Ghana, Master of Arts in Community Psychology from Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada and PhD from the University of Ghana. I teach Community Psychology and Social Psychology at the University of Ghana. Indeed, I am one of the pioneers of Community Psychology in Ghana. My research focus is suicide and suicide prevention, mental health and gender. I am currently the National Representative of the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) in Ghana and a Co-Chair of the Council of National Representatives of the IASP. I am passionate about teaching and practicing Community Psychology. Below are some of my most recent publications:

- Osafo, J., **Akotia, C. S.**, Andoh-Arthur, J., & Puplampu, B. M. (2021). The role of religious leaders in suicide prevention in Ghana. A qualitative analysis. *Pastoral Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-021-00955-4>
- Adzimah-Alade, M., **Akotia, C. S.**, Annor, F., & Quarshie, E. N. B (2020). Vigilantism in Ghana: Trends, victim characteristics, and reported reasons. *The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice*, 59 (2), 194–213
- Osafo, J., Oppong, A, K., **Akotia, C. S.** (2020). Suicide prevention in the African Region. *Crisis* 41(Suppl 1), S53–S71. <https://doi.org/10.1027/0227-5910/a000668>
- Akotia, C. S., Osafo, J., Asare-Doku, W., & Boakye, K., (2019). News editors' views about suicide and suicide stories in Ghana. *Psychological Studies*, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12646-019-00511-4>
- Akotia, C. S., Knizek, B. L., Hjelmeland, H., Kinyanda, E., & Osafo, J. (2019). Reasons for attempting suicide: An exploratory study in Ghana. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 56(1), 233 – 249.
- Asare-Doku, W., Osafo, J., & **Akotia, C. S.** (2019). Comparing the reasons for suicide from attempt survivors and their families in Ghana, *BMC Public Health*, 19(1), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-019-6743-z>.

### Academic Policies

#### Grade Conversion

Your lecturer may use one of the following scales of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

- A = 94-100 or 4.0
- A- = 90-93 or 3.7
- B+ = 87-89 or 3.3
- B = 84-86 or 3.0

B- = 80-83 or 2.7  
C+ = 77-79 or 2.3  
C = 74-76 or 2.0  
C- = 70-73 or 1.7  
D+ = 67-69 or 1.3  
D = 65-66 or 1.0  
F = below 65 or 0

## **Attendance Policy**

Studying at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers, or online through NYU Brightspaces if the course is remote synchronous/blended, is expected promptly when class begins. Attendance will be checked at each class meeting. If you have scheduled a remote course immediately preceding/following an in-person class, you may want to write to the Academic Office, NYU Accra to see if you can take your remote class at the Academic Center.

As soon as it becomes clear that you cannot attend a class, you must inform your professor and/or the Academics team by e-mail immediately (i.e. before the start of your class). Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, Moses Center accommodations, religious observance or emergencies. Your professor or site staff may ask you to present a doctor's note or an exceptional permission from an NYU Staff member as proof. Emergencies or other exceptional circumstances that you wish to be treated confidentially must be presented to staff. Doctor's notes must be submitted in person or by e-mail to the Academics team, who will inform your professors.

Unexcused absences may be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student's final course grade for every week's worth of classes missed and may negatively affect your class participation grade. Four unexcused absences in one course may lead to a Fail in that course. Being more than 15 minutes late counts as an unexcused absence. Furthermore, your professor is entitled to deduct points for frequently joining the class late.

Exams, tests and quizzes, deadlines, and oral presentations that are missed due to illness always require a doctor's note as documentation. It is the student's responsibility to produce this doctor's note and submit it to site staff; until this doctor's note is produced the missed assessment is graded with an F and no make-up assessment is scheduled. In content classes, an F in one assignment may lead to failure of the entire class.

Regardless of whether an absence is excused or not, it is the student's responsibility to catch up with the work that was missed.

## **Final exams**

Final exams must be taken at their designated times. Should there be a conflict between your final exams, please bring this to the attention of the Academics team. Final exams may not be taken early, and students should not plan to leave the site before the end of the finals period.

## Late Submission of Work

- (1) Work submitted late receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100 point scale for each day it is late (including weekends and public holidays), unless an extension has been approved (with a doctor's note or by approval of NYU SITE Staff), in which case the 2 points per day deductions start counting from the day the extended deadline has passed.
- (2) Without an approved extension, written work submitted more than 5 days (including weekends and public holidays) following the submission date receives an F.
- (3) Assignments due during finals week that are submitted more than 3 days late (including weekends and public holidays) without previously arranged extensions will not be accepted and will receive a zero. Any exceptions or extensions for work during finals week must be discussed with the Site Director.
- (4) Students who are late for a written exam have no automatic right to take extra time or to write the exam on another day.
- (5) Please remember that university computers do not keep your essays - you must save them elsewhere. Having lost parts of your essay on the university computer is no excuse for a late submission.

## Academic Honesty/Plagiarism

As the University's policy on "[Academic Integrity for Students at NYU](#)" states: "At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community. By accepting membership in this community, students take responsibility for demonstrating these values in their own conduct and for recognizing and supporting these values in others." Students at Global Academic Centers must follow the University and school policies.

NYU takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. Your lecturer may ask you to sign a declaration of authorship form and may check your assignments by using TurnItIn or another software designed to detect offences against academic integrity.

The presentation of another person's words, ideas, judgment, images, or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism. It is also an offense to submit work for assignments from two different courses that is substantially the same (be it oral presentations or written work). If there is an overlap of the subject of your assignment with one that you produced for another course (either in the current or any previous semester), you **MUST** inform your professor.

For guidelines on academic honesty, clarification of the definition of plagiarism, examples of procedures and sanctions, and resources to support proper citation, please see:

[NYU Academic Integrity Policies and Guidelines](#)

[NYU Library Guides](#)

## **Inclusivity Policies and Priorities**

NYU's Office of Global Programs and NYU's global sites are committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion. In order to nurture a more inclusive global university, NYU affirms the value of sharing differing perspectives and encourages open dialogue through a variety of pedagogical approaches. Our goal is to make all students feel included and welcome in all aspects of academic life, including our syllabi, classrooms, and educational activities/spaces.

### **Attendance Rules on Religious Holidays**

Members of any religious group may, without penalty, excuse themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Students who anticipate being absent due to religious observance should notify their lecturer AND NYU SITE's Academics Office in writing via e-mail one week in advance. If examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on the day the student will be absent, the Academics Office will schedule a make-up examination or extend the deadline for assignments. Please note that an absence is only excused for the holiday but not for any days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. See also [University Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#)

### **Pronouns and Name Pronunciation (Albert and Zoom)**

Students, staff, and faculty have the opportunity to add their pronouns, as well as the pronunciation of their names, into Albert. Students can have this information displayed to faculty, advisors, and administrators in Albert, NYU Brightspace, the NYU Home internal directory, as well as other NYU systems. Students can also opt out of having their pronouns viewed by their instructors, in case they feel more comfortable sharing their pronouns outside of the classroom. For more information on how to change this information for your Albert account, please see the [Pronouns and Name Pronunciation website](#).

Students, staff, and faculty are also encouraged, though not required, to list their pronouns, and update their names in the name display for Zoom. For more information on how to make this change, please see the [Personalizing Zoom Display Names website](#).

### **Moses Accommodations Statement**

Academic accommodations are available for students with documented and registered disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Student Accessibility (+1 212-998-4980 or [mosescsd@nyu.edu](mailto:mosescsd@nyu.edu)) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance. Accommodations for this course are managed through NYU [SITE].

### **Bias Response**

The New York University Bias Response Line provides a mechanism through which members of our community can share or report experiences and concerns of bias, discrimination, or harassing behavior that may occur within our community.

Experienced administrators in the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) receive and assess reports, and then help facilitate responses, which may include referral to another University school or unit, or investigation if warranted according to the University's existing Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.

The Bias Response Line is designed to enable the University to provide an open forum that helps to ensure that our community is equitable and inclusive.

To report an incident, you may do so in one of three ways:

- Online using the [Web Form \(link\)](#)
- Email: [bias.response@nyu.edu](mailto:bias.response@nyu.edu)
- Phone: 212-998-2277
- +233 24 463 0610

*Note: Aspects of the scheduled activities could change over the course of the semester*