



PSY422H1F: Community Psychology & Advocacy



Class meets on **Thursdays from 3-5pm in SK702** (Faculty of Social Work, 246 Bloor St. W)

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Ashley Waggoner Denton (she/her/hers)
Email: a.waggoner@utoronto.ca
Office Location: Sidney Smith Hall, room 6019 (sixth floor)
Drop-in hours are Tuesdays from 3-4pm; you can also book an appointment with me [here](#) (may request virtual or in-person).

Teaching Assistant: Niro Mohanathas (niro.mohanathas@mail.utoronto.ca)
Niro will attend most of our class meetings; please just send her an email if you would like to make an appointment with her.

Course Description, Goals, and Prerequisites

This course is designed for students who are eager to apply their knowledge of psychological science to social problems. Students will be introduced to the fundamentals of community psychology while also examining how social psychological theory and research can be applied to understand and address issues that affect communities. This course will help students develop the skills and confidence necessary to advocate successfully on public interest issues relevant to psychology. Students will also work in partners/teams with a community advocacy group to collaboratively address a specific problem or need of the organization. Through a guided process of practice and reflection, students will increase their self-efficacy and come to recognize their ability to use their psychological knowledge and skills to make change in the world. Classroom discussions will integrate community experiences with lecture material. Enrolment is by application (see psychology department website). Not eligible for CR/NCR option.

Prerequisites: PSY202H1 or equivalent; PSY220H1 or equivalent; one of PSY320H1/ PSY321H1/ PSY322H1/ PSY333H1/ PSY336H1 or permission of the instructor

Distribution requirement: Science

Breadth Requirement: Society and Its Institutions (2)

Course Experience: Partnership-Based Experience

Reading Material/Textbook

We will be reading selected chapters from the following online textbook:

Jason, L. A., Glantsman, O., O'Brien, J. F., Ramian, K. N. (Editors). *Introduction to Community Psychology: Becoming an Agent of Change*. Retrieved from: <https://press.rebus.community/introductiontocommunitypsychology/>

Additional course materials (articles, podcasts) will be made available through Quercus and/or the U of T Library system.

Course Webpage/Quercus

The website associated with this course is accessible via <http://q.utoronto.ca>. This is where you will find all course materials, assignments, etc. If you have any questions about using this site, please do not hesitate to ask me!

Course Goals & Learning Outcomes

Goal 1: Knowledge and application

- Describe critical themes, values, and methodological approaches used in community psychology
- Apply psychological principles to clarify pressing societal needs and inform public policy
- Propose appropriate psychology-based solutions in applied settings

Goal 2: Develop and practice interpersonal and intercultural responsiveness

- Articulate the value of interacting sensitively with people of diverse abilities, backgrounds, and cultural perspectives
- Evaluate how interpersonal opportunities and challenges develop from differences related to diversity

Goal 3: Apply psychological principles to strengthen community and improve quality of life

- Learn how to advocate for social change in an effective and culturally responsive manner
- Complete a project defined by a community organization to advance their mission

Goal 4: Interact and collaborate effectively with others

- Recognize the potential to develop stronger solutions through collaborative problem-solving
- Collaborate effectively on team-based projects

Goal 5: Communicate effectively for different purposes

- Craft clear and concise communications to fulfill a purpose and address specific audiences

Goal 6: Exhibit effective self-regulation

- Use self-regulation strategies (e.g., focused attention, time management, meeting deadlines) to enhance performance and develop evidence for a strong work ethic
- Incorporate suggestions from feedback from peers, educators, supervisors, and community partners to improve task performance

Adapted from the APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major 3.0

Course Evaluation/Marking Scheme**Online Reading Quizzes – 5%**

- As this is a small, highly interactive class, preparation for class is *essential*, not only to your personal success in this course, but to *everyone's* overall learning experience. On certain weeks, you will be asked to complete an online “quiz” and/or other activity based on that week’s reading/preparatory material. Completion of these activities will help ensure that you are actively engaging with the course material and that you are prepared for class discussions.

Discussion Board Reflections – 5%

- Throughout the semester, students will write and respond to periodic reflection prompts. You will take the time to engage in critical reflection by intentionally thinking deeply about your learning experiences, your reactions and responses, and what you will take from these experiences in order to inform future actions and improve outcomes. More information will be provided in Quercus. You will receive feedback on your entries in September (to make sure you are on track), and a final mark in December.

Advocacy Assignment – 40%

Due dates: [Various \(see Quercus/course schedule below\)](#)

- In this five-part scaffolded assignment, you will gain experience advocating for an issue of your choosing. You will:
 - Learn more about the content and context of your chosen issue
 - Craft a letter, op ed piece, video, or other communication that effectively communicates your well-informed position on the issue to a targeted audience
 - Give and receive feedback from your classmates and submit a reflection on what you learned and what you will do with your communication
- More information is available in Quercus

Infographic: Understanding Your Community Partner – 10%

Due date: [Oct 12, 2023](#)

- You will create an infographic that could be used by your community partner to teach others about who they are and what they do. Most organizations/groups are complex; your infographic does not (and should not)

try to cover everything your organization does. It is up to you to decide on the specific purpose/goal of your infographic and to craft your communication accordingly. Think carefully about who your intended audience is (potential donors? funding agencies? members of a particular community?) and what you want them to learn or do.

- More information is available in Quercus.

Engagement with Community Partner & Project – 5%

- As part of this course, you will spend approximately 30 hours working on a collaborative organization-partnered project. Your ability to collaborate successfully and engage responsibly with your community partner and classmates will be assessed via peer and supervisor assessments.

Community Partner Project: Group Presentation – 20%

- Toward the end of the semester (see schedule below), each group will deliver a presentation to the class and their community partner on their project and what they have accomplished. The marking scheme for these group presentations will be determined collectively by the class in early November.

Final Paper: A Skills-Focused Reflection – 15%

Due date: [December 15, 2023](#)

- As your final assignment in the class, you will be asked to write a reflection of your learning experience in the course, with an emphasis on the skills that you learned and how you will continue to develop and apply these skills in the future. More information will be provided after the Fall break.

Course Policies

Attendance Policy

Attending our weekly class meetings is an essential part of the class, and everyone is expected to attend every class meeting. If you do find that you need to miss a class (e.g., due to illness), please let me know. You are responsible for catching up on what was missed and will still be expected to submit any work that is due that week. I highly recommend exchanging contact information with a classmate so that you may help each other out if you need to miss a class.

Late Term Work Policies:

Reading Quizzes

The “reading quizzes” are brief checks meant to ensure that everyone is prepared for class. Because of this, it is essential that the quizzes are done before class; however, everyone gets **one 48-hour late pass** and may submit their quiz during this time frame without any penalty. No other late quizzes will be accepted.

Discussion Board Reflections

Your discussion board reflections/responses will be graded based on quality and quantity; if you miss responding to a certain reflection prompt, you can make it up by ensuring that you submit thoughtful responses to your classmates’ posts, and a high-

quality response to the next week's reflection prompt.

Other Assignments/Papers

If at any point you find you will be needing extra time to complete an assignment (or a specific part a scaffolded assignment), please speak with me as soon as possible. Certain deadlines are more flexible than others, and depending on the nature of your situation, we will work together to come up with the best solution. In certain cases, documentation for extensions may be required. Please see <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academics/student-absences> for more information on recognized documentation for missed term work.

Re-marking Policy

Requests for an assignment to be re-graded must be made within two weeks of the return of the assignment (please send the request via email). I will re-grade the assignment and the mark given upon the re-grade will be final (whether it is lower, higher, or the same as the original grade). Please make sure you have carefully reviewed your assignment, the feedback you received, and the marking rubric (if applicable) before submitting it for a re-grade (to ensure that you really do think it was graded inappropriately, and that you are not simply disappointed with the grade you received).

Grading Policy

Please note that all course marks are tentative until approved by the Department Chair and Dean's Office and recorded in the Office of the Faculty Registrar. For more information on What Grades Mean at U of T, please see: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/general/grading-policy>

Email Policy

Please check the syllabus and the class materials posted on Quercus before sending an email. You will find answers to most of your questions there. I am available to talk and answer questions after class, or you may use the link on the first page to book an appointment with me.

When sending email, **you must use your official utoronto email account**, otherwise your email may be marked as spam and never received! Please use a meaningful subject line and start it with PSY329 (e.g., "PSY329: class absence"). Use a proper greeting (e.g., "Hi Dr. Waggoner Denton") and sign with your name (no need to add your student number or anything else!). State your concern clearly and succinctly. If the issue is something that would be better discussed in person, please book a meeting with me instead.

I will typically respond to your email within 48-hours, but please note that I do not check email on the weekends (nor do I expect TAs or anyone else to).

Health & Safety

To keep each other and our community safe, this course will follow the [U of T policy guidelines](#). Please be respectful of each other's choices and levels of comfort both during class and if meeting up for groupwork. If you need to miss a class due to illness or injury, please send me an email to let me know.

Plagiarism Detection

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

Generative AI

Please note that the use of generative artificial intelligence tools and apps is strictly prohibited in all course assessments unless explicitly stated otherwise by the instructor in this course. This includes ChatGPT and other AI writing and coding assistants. **Students are encouraged to bring up any questions regarding generative AI use in this class to the instructor; as a class, we will discuss the potential perks and pitfalls of this potential use and make informed decisions together.** Please note that the use of generative AI in this course without receiving explicit permission from the instructor may be considered use of an unauthorized aid, which is a form of cheating.

Academic Resources and Accommodations

Students with Disabilities or Accommodation Requests

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have an acute or ongoing disability issue or accommodation need, you should register with Accessibility Services (AS) (www.accessibility.utoronto.ca) at the beginning of the academic year. Without registration, you will not be able to verify your situation with your instructors, and instructors will not be advised about your accommodation needs. AS will assess your medical situation, develop an accommodation plan with you, and support you in requesting accommodation for your coursework. Remember that the process of accommodation is private: AS will not share details of your condition with any instructor, and your instructors will not reveal that you are registered with AS.

Specific Medical or Personal Circumstances

If you become ill and it affects your ability to do your academic work, consult me right away. Normally, I will ask you for documentation in support of your specific medical circumstances. This documentation can be an Absence Declaration (via ACORN) or the University's Verification of Student Illness or Injury (VOI) form. The VOI indicates the impact and severity of the illness, while protecting your privacy about the details of the nature of the illness. If you cannot submit a VOI due to limits on terms of use, you can submit a different form (like a letter from a doctor), as long as it is an original document, and it contains the same information as the VOI (including dates, academic impact, practitioner's signature, phone and registration number). For more information on the VOI, please see <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca>. For information on Absence Declaration Tool for A&S students, please see <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/absence>. If you get a concussion, break your hand, or

suffer some other acute injury, you should register with Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

Please note that the ACORN Absence Declaration Tool can be used once per academic term and is intended to be used in the following circumstances:

- A health condition or injury (e.g., illness, serious physical harm, mental health issue, scheduled surgery)
- A personal or family emergency (e.g., unanticipated and unavoidable familial incident beyond the student's control)
- Bereavement (e.g., the death a student's immediate family member or close friend)

Religious Accommodation

As a student at the University of Toronto, you are part of a diverse community that welcomes and includes students and faculty from a wide range of backgrounds, cultural traditions, and spiritual beliefs. For my part, I will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling compulsory activities on religious holy days not captured by statutory holidays. Further to University Policy, if you anticipate that your ability to complete some aspect of this course will be affected by a religious observance, please let me know as early as possible, so that we can work together to make alternate arrangements.

Writing: As a student here at the University of Toronto, you are expected to write well. The university provides its students with a number of resources to help them achieve this. For more information on campus writing centres and writing courses, please visit <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/> .

English Language Learners (ELL) Program:

<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell>

ELL offers a range of programs/workshops/resources to assist all Arts & Science students who wish to improve their English language skills (including reading, listening, speaking, and writing). Please see their website for more information about these resources.

Academic Integrity: All students, faculty and staff are expected to follow the University's guidelines and policies on academic integrity. For students, this means following the standards of academic honesty when writing assignments, collaborating with fellow students, and writing tests and exams. Ensure that the work you submit for grading represents your own honest efforts. Plagiarism—representing someone else's work as your own or submitting work that you have previously submitted for marks in another class or program—is a serious offence that can result in sanctions. Speak to me or your TA for advice on anything that you find unclear. To learn more about how to cite and use source material appropriately and for other writing support, see the U of T writing support website at www.writing.utoronto.ca/ . Consult the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters for a complete outline of the University's policy and expectations. For more information, please see <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai> and <http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/>

Mental Health and Well-being

As a student, you may experience challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation, financial concerns, family worries and so forth. These factors may affect your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate fully in daily activities. Everyone feels stressed now and then – it is a normal part of university life. Some days are better than others, and there is no wrong time to reach out. There are resources for every situation and every level of stress. There are many helpful resources available through your College Registrar or through Student Life (<https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/health-wellness/>). If you are experiencing more acute distress, please visit: <http://safety.utoronto.ca/>. An important part of the University experience is learning how and when to ask for help. Please take the time to inform yourself of available resources.



Looking for help, but not sure where to begin?

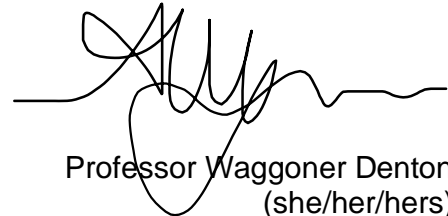
Navi can help!

Other Resources:

Student Life Programs and Services (<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/>)

Academic Success Services (<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc>)

Never hesitate to reach out to me with any questions or concerns. I'm looking forward to a fantastic semester with you!



Professor Waggoner Denton
(she/her/hers)

Course Outline/Schedule

**Subject to change, please check modules on Quercus for any updates to readings, etc.*

Class Date	Topic & Readings/Preparation
Sept 7 th Reading Quiz Due <i>(no late penalty this week!)</i>	Introduction to Community Psychology READ: Ch. 1 https://press.rebus.community/introductiontocommunitypsychology/cha/pter/intro-to-community-psychology/ (Note: If crunched for time, read this version: https://nobaproject.com/modules/introduction-to-community-psychology)
Sept 14 th	Introduction to Our Community Partners Complete: https://employableskills.com/ REVIEW/EXPLORE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.mindfulnesseveryday.org/about.html • https://www.sprintseniorecare.org/about-us/mission-vision-and-strategic-plan/ • https://www.pamojainstitute.org/about-us Due this week: Part 1 of Advocacy Assignment
Sept 21 st Reading Quiz Due	Diversity and Empowerment Read: Ch. 8 https://press.rebus.community/introductiontocommunitypsychology/c/hapter/respect-for-diversity/ & Ch. 10 https://press.rebus.community/introductiontocommunitypsychology/c/hapter/empowerment/ Due this week: Part 2 of Advocacy Assignment
Sept 28 th Reading Quiz Due	Prevention & Promotion Read: Ch. 12 https://press.rebus.community/introductiontocommunitypsychology/cha/pter/prevention-and-promotion/ & Ch. 16 https://press.rebus.community/introductiontocommunitypsychology/cha/pter/behavioral-approaches-in-community-settings/
Oct 5 th	No Class (Instructor Away for Conference)

	<i>Focus on Community-Partnered Project & Completion of Your Infographics!</i>
Oct 12 th Reading Quiz Due	<p>Community Interventions and Participatory Action Research</p> <p>READ: Ch. 6 https://press.rebus.community/introductiontocommunitypsychology/chapter/community-research/ & Ch. 11 https://press.rebus.community/introductiontocommunitypsychology/chapter/communityinterventions/</p> <p>Due this week: Infographics</p>
Oct 19 th Reading Quiz Due	<p>Public Policy & Advocacy</p> <p>Read: Ch. 14 https://press.rebus.community/introductiontocommunitypsychology/chapter/public-policy/</p> <p>Review: Section 1, Section 2, other sections as desired: https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/participation/promoting-interest</p> <p>Due this week: Part 3 of Advocacy Assignment</p>
Oct 26 th	<p>Being an Agent of Change</p> <p>Read: Russi, L. (2022). When social change happens: Observation of experience and the paradoxes of pivot-making. <i>Mind, Culture, and Activity</i>, 29(2), 156-168. https://doi.org/10.1080/10749039.2022.2093376</p> <p>Due IN CLASS: Part 4 of advocacy assignment (draft for feedback)</p>
Nov 2 nd	<p>Mid-Semester Check-In</p> <p>Community-partner project updates from all groups; Discuss expectations for group presentations. Sharing of final advocacy communications.</p> <p>Due after reading week: Final advocacy assignments & reflections</p>
Nov 9 th	FALL READING WEEK (no class)
Nov 16 th	<p>Youth Mental Health & School Based Interventions <i>Mindfulness Everyday Group Presentation(s)</i></p> <p>Read: Sohn, E. (2022). Tackling the mental-health crisis in young people. <i>Nature</i>, 608(7924), S39-S41. https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-022-02206-9</p> <p>Read:</p>

	<p>https://www.communitypsychology.com/schools-can-help-students-with-trauma-histories/</p> <p>Listen: Discovering Community Psychology Podcast, Episode 4 (Bea Herbert, States of Mind)</p>
Nov 23 ^d	<p>Black Women & Health Care <i>Pamoja Institute Group Presentation(s)</i></p> <p>Listen: The Community Psychologist Podcast, Episode June 29 2022, Radical Self-Care and Sexual Communication Empowerment</p>
Nov 30 th	<p>Aging Communities <i>SPRINT Senior Care Group Presentations(s)</i></p> <p>Read: https://www.communitypsychology.com/is-community-psychology-forever-young/</p> <p>Read: Naidu, S. C., Persaud, M., Sheikhan, N. Y., Sem, G., O'Driscoll, V., Diamond, L., ... & Kuluski, K. (2022). Student–senior isolation prevention partnership: a Canada-wide programme to mitigate social exclusion during the COVID-19 pandemic. <i>Health Promotion International</i>, 37(2), https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daab118</p>