

PSYC 6250 ADVANCED COMMUNITY DYNAMICS

SPRING 2021

Land Acknowledgment: The University of Massachusetts Lowell rests on the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary lands of the Pennacook people. We recognize the colonial violence perpetrated by settlers and affirm that this acknowledgement is insufficient to undo the harm that has been done and continues to be perpetrated against Indigenous peoples.

Professor Urmitapa Dutta, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Psychology

Class Time	Thursdays 3:30 – 6:20pm
How to Join Class Meetings	https://uml.zoom.us/j/96686677772 Meeting ID: 966 8667 7772 Note: 1) For security reasons, please join Zoom using your UML email credentials. 2) This link is also available through Blackboard and your email (sent out during the first week of class).
Email	urmitapa_dutta@uml.edu
Office Hours	Tuesdays and Thursdays 1 TO 2:30 PM You can schedule an appointment using the following link: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080548A5AC29A5FDO-office4 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please review the available slots and click on the button to sign up. The slots are for 15 minutes each. If you anticipate needing more time, please sign up for 2 slots.• At the scheduled time, please log in to zoom using this link (also available on Blackboard): https://uml.zoom.us/j/97025978337 (the link and meeting ID are also listed next to the slot you sign up for. <i>For security reasons, please join Zoom using your UML email credentials.</i>• Once you log in, you will be in the zoom 'waiting room'. I will let you in but please note that sometimes this may take a few minutes in case I am finishing up a meeting with another student - sort of the virtual version of you waiting outside my office! Scheduling an appointment is recommended as it holds the time for you. Please cancel the appointment via the website or an email to me in case you are unable to keep your appointment.

LEARNING/TEACHING IN THE MIDST OF A GLOBAL PANDEMIC: BUILDING A CO-LEARNING COMMUNITY OF CARE

None of us signed up for this: the disease, deaths, disruptions, distancing, and deep uncertainty of the times we are living in. Now, more than ever before, **the human option is the only option**. We are all affected by this unprecedented and continually evolving situation. Yet we are affected unevenly and in different ways. We must therefore honor, respect and care for others around us, including our fellow classmates and professors as we struggle through this crisis together. Therefore, **we are going to prioritize being human and supporting each other as humans**.

This is a deeply unsettling time and we need to let go of the illusions of “normalcy.” While we will continue to foster intellectual and personal nourishment, build community and connections, we will do so in ways that are flexible. Some kinds of expectations, objectives or assignments are no longer possible; nor are they reasonable or valuable in the present moment. **There may not be a “virtual equivalent” of a course but learning can take place in diverse ways, across different places and spaces. Together, we will be creative, we will adapt, and generate possibilities for understanding and enacting critical social justice praxis in these fraught times.**

We will strive to remain open to and embrace new experiences and support each other in these challenging times!

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Historically, the course, Advanced Community Dynamics in the Community Social Psychology program was taught as:

An examination of principles that influence community structure, function, and evolution over time. Students will learn how community patterns and activities can best be understood and how community problems and concerns can best be addressed, employing psychological and other conceptual frameworks and perspectives. Specific emphasis will be placed on the historic and diverse city of Lowell.

In its present iteration, the course is explicitly anchored in critical, anti-racist, feminist, Global South, decolonial, and decolonizing theories and social movements. We **do not** approach “community” as an object of inquiry. A defining feature of this course is its deep historical ties to the city of Lowell. In that tradition, we will have assigned readings/guest speakers to facilitate a critical engagement with local community issues. We are **not** going to view local communities as sites of research or intervention; rather we will use this opportunity to **learn by engaging** with issues of racism, migration, and gentrification in Lowell through critical community psychology lenses. In fact, through readings and dialogue, we will disrupt the (colonial) disciplinary gaze from community as object-of-inquiry, committing instead to lived struggles of those at the frontlines of injustice—focusing on mutuality, solidarity, relationality, and ethics of care.

Some of the large questions that we will explore through the Advanced Community Dynamics course this semester include:

- How do we do community-based research and action in ways that critically engage and address various forms of inequality and oppression?
- How do we do so through meaningful and sustained engagement with communities?
- What does it mean to work “alongside” communities as co-researchers and co-learners (rather than treating “communities” as objects of inquiry)?
- What are some principles, approaches and examples of transformative social change?

The course will build upon the foundations of critical community psychology to focus on the dynamics of inequality and oppression on one hand and social justice on the other. In particular, course materials will center the perspectives, experiences, knowledges, and analysis of historically underrepresented and marginalized groups in conceptualizing social change.

LEARNING GOALS

Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Develop a broad understanding of the scope and nature of transformative social change, while critically reflecting upon one's roles, motivations, ethics, and actions with regards to involvement in social justice movements and social change efforts.
- Explain how intersections of race, gender, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, sexuality, socioeconomic class, religion, and other social categorizations are implicated in oppression and privilege. Simultaneously, scrutinize how your own values, assumptions, and socialization messages shape your understanding of community dynamics.
- Demonstrate emerging skills in applying concepts in appropriate, responsive and ethical ways to approach community engaged praxis.
- Demonstrate understanding and appreciation of working collaboratively, respectfully, and in solidarity with communities in struggle.
- Develop collaborative group work capabilities (including but not limited to deepening understanding through dialogue and debate; cultivating metacognition; cultivating responsibility and mutual caring; appreciating synergy and emergence in group work – i.e., the whole is more than the sum of its parts).
- Effectively communicate (in oral and written forms) awareness and understanding of community dynamics informed by decolonizing and feminist social justice perspectives.
- Effectively assess the strengths and weaknesses of peer work and make concrete suggestions for improvement.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

"The academy is not paradise . . . the classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility, we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress." (bell hooks, 1994, 207)

A daughter of two educators, I was socialized early to think critically about education and the kind of teacher I aspired to be. Growing up, I imbibed the social justice values that framed my parents' work with first generation students, teaching amidst ethnic conflict, opening our home to students, and forging enduring relationships with their students and the wider community. Through their work, I became aware of the ways in which education can offer spaces for critique and re-imagination. Classrooms, for me, are dynamic settings for engaged learning and transformative social change.

My teaching of this course is guided by a strong social justice orientation. Together, we will grapple with the challenges of creating a classroom space for teaching/learning social justice—a space that acknowledges the embodied and unequal power relations that exist in classrooms, which are in many

ways, microcosms of power relations that define our social worlds. At times, this will require us to enter and critically engage difficult and discomfiting spaces, which require us to be courageous and compassionate at the same time.

Fundamental to this course, is the willingness, courage, and capacity to examine how our own social locations, values, assumptions, priorities, and resources affect our understanding of and engagement with both oppression and social change—something that we will actively engage across assigned readings, reflections, class discussions, and writing assignments. The course will encourage students to move beyond their comfort zones and lead themselves to new and creative ways of thinking and acting.

Finally, I expect students to assume collective responsibility over the classroom experience, support each other while also holding themselves and others accountable. Therefore, success in this course entails mutual preparation, engagement, and participation. I am committed to supporting you, but you also have a responsibility to seek out what you need from me (and not assume that I always know).

CLASS FORMAT/STRUCTURE

As a graduate seminar, this course is designed to be co-led and co-facilitated by students. A core form of engagement and participation in the course involves deep discussion, dialogue, and analysis that push the limits of our thinking and ways of knowing and being in the world. Thus, what we are able to accomplish in the course will depend on the kind of collective we can (and hope) to become, the kind of space we co-create, and the ways in which we hold space for each other. In order to build a learning community of care in an atypically large (for graduate classes) course, the class will be grouped into “pods¹” that will be created at the beginning of the semester. **Each group/pod will consist of 4 students who will work, read, co-learn and support each other over the course of the semester.** This way, you will be part of a smaller, more engaged community of learners rather than a larger virtual class. As importantly, I hope that you will imbibe the strategies, processes, and lessons of co-building/co-learning to other community, organizational, or institutional spaces where you work.

A typical class will consist of some combination of the following:

- **Anchoring/grounding**
- **Pod Work:** A portion of the class will be devoted to working in your pods (in breakout rooms). During this time, you will connect/check-in with pod members, engage deeply with the readings, participate in discussions/dialogue, read/watch assigned materials, etc., and otherwise support each other as needed. At times, you may use this space to review each other’s work and offer feedback. I will ‘drop into’ the pods or breakout rooms to provide you with any support as needed.
- **Brief overview and explanation of concepts/theories:** Most weeks, I will offer some contextualization or overview of the materials and explanation of specific concepts/theories as needed.
- **Open discussions (sometimes facilitated/led by specific pods)**

¹ The “pod” structure/process as a way of building communities of care is inspired and informed by the Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective. We will talk more in class. <https://batjc.wordpress.com/pods-and-pod-mapping-worksheet/>

- **Guest Speakers:** We will host several scholar-activists and organizers who are engaged in or work in solidarity with different struggles for justice. Through these conversations, we hope to deepen our understanding of social (in)justice issues along with community-based research and praxis.

***Please note that we will strive to adopt some degree of flexibility and openness to allow for alternative readings, new speakers, topics, and/or modifications in assignments depending on shifting/emerging circumstances and needs.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Note that schedule and readings may change to be responsive to our collective needs/interests and guest speakers' schedules. Mindful of the reality that we are living through a global pandemic, we also understand that we may need to revise or move around things as the situation unfolds and impacts us.

Critical Reading/Analysis: As you prepare for class each week (reading, listen to podcasts, watching videos) please ask the following questions:

- What are the lenses through which the arguments are made? What are some implicit or tacit assumptions that underlie the readings?
- Whose perspectives/experiences are prioritized or centered in the reading? What are the implications—and for whom?
- How do the assigned readings speak to each other? *E.g., Can you use one reading to critique another? What arguments are advanced by the readings, when considered together? What arguments or questions emerge when you bring the current week's readings in conversation with readings/discussions from previous weeks?*
- How do the readings trouble/challenge/transform your understanding of social justice and/or specific social issues? Similarly, how do your experiences relate to what you are reading?

***** All readings/links are posted on Blackboard*****

Date	Topics, Readings, Events
1. Jan 28	<p>We will use class time to meet/connect, go over the syllabus, course organization, pods, and begin to connect with each other in your respective pods (listed under Assignments and Activities).</p> <p>As you get ready for the first day, please reflect on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What community/community-engaged praxis (research, relationships, action) means to you • What solidarity means to you • Practices of care/caring and healing that are meaningful to you <p>Please also read the following prior to class - these are short write-ups/poetry to orient and ground ourselves for the semester.</p> <p>1. Self-determined care and community care (by adrienne marie brown)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://adriennemareebrown.net/tag/community-care/

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://adriennemareebrown.net/tag/self-determined-care/ <p>2. Solidarity vs. ally theater</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.blackgirldangerous.com/2015/11/ally-theater/ <p>3. <i>I am not your data</i> – Adivasi (indigenous) scholar activist Late Dr. Abhay Flavian Xaxa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.kractivist.org/rest-in-power-dr-abhay-flavian-xaxa-i-am-not-your-data/
2. Feb 4	<p>Foundational Perspectives - 1: Rethinking Community</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tuck, E. (2009). Suspending damage: A letter to communities. <i>Harvard Educational Review</i>, 79(3), 409–428. 2. Dutta, U. (in press). Decentering “community” in community psychology: Towards radical relationality and resistance. In S. Kessi, S. Suffla, & M. Seedat (Eds.) <i>Decolonial Enactments in Community Psychology</i>, Springer Series in Community Psychology. 3. Review the handout carefully (to be discussed in class): <i>Fostering Brave Spaces 2021</i>
3. Feb 11	<p>Foundational Perspectives - 2: Epistemic Justice</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sonn, C.C., Baker, A., & Agung, R. (in press). Promoting epistemic justice: Creativity, identity and belonging among African diaspora in Australia. In G. Stevens & C.C. Sonn (Eds.) <i>Decoloniality, Knowledge Production and Epistemic Justice in Contemporary Community Psychology</i>, Springer Series in Community Psychology. 2. Dutta, U. (2017). The everyday and the exceptional: Rethinking gendered violence and human rights in Garo Hills, India. In S. Grabe (Ed.) <i>Women’s human rights: A social psychological perspective on resistance, liberation, and justice</i>. (pp. 179-204). New York, NY: Oxford University Press. <p>Guest: Christopher C. Sonn (co-author of the first reading)</p>
4. Feb 18	<p>From Damage to Desire-based Community Praxis: An Ethical Relational Orientation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Watkins, M. (2015). Psychosocial accompaniment. <i>Journal of Social and Political Psychology</i>, 3(1), 324-341. 2. Torre, M. E. (2009). Participatory action research and critical race theory: Fueling spaces for nos-otras to research. <i>The Urban Review</i>, 41(1), 106-120. 3. Atallah, D. G. (in press). Reflections on radical love and rebellion: Towards decolonial solidarity in community psychology praxis. In S. Kessi, S. Suffla, & M. Seedat (Eds.) <i>Decolonial Enactments in Community Psychology</i>, Springer Series in Community Psychology.

	<p>Supporting video Thinking decolonially of evidence and representation in contexts of suffering https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aVDvU-xNVek&t=34s</p> <p>Guest: Jessica Grant</p>
5. Feb 25	<p>Situating Structural and Cultural Violence in Community-based Praxis</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dutta, U., Sonn, C. C., & Lykes, M. B. (2016). Situating and contesting structural violence in community-based research and action. <i>Community Psychology in Global Perspective</i>, 2(2), 1-20. [This article is the introduction to a special issue of the journal <i>Community Psychology in Global Perspective</i> on the theme “Structural Violence and Community-based Research and Action”.] <p>In addition to the above article (introduction), read at least one more article from the 7 research articles that form the special issue.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Open access journal link: http://sibese.unisalento.it/index.php/cpgp/issue/view/1346 <p>Supporting podcast: <i>The Problem We All Live With (Prologue + Act 1 + Act 2)</i> - https://m.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/562/the-problem-we-all-live-with</p>
6. Mar 4	<p>Beyond Carceral Logic, Building Alternatives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Palacios, L. (2016). Challenging convictions: Indigenous and black race-radical feminists theorizing the carceral state and abolitionist praxis in the United States and Canada. <i>Meridians</i>, 15(1), 137-165. 2. Listen to this interview w/ Mariam Kaba: The Practices We Need: #metoo and Transformative Justice <p>Guests: Cheyenne Queen Wade & Dara Bayer</p>
7. Mar 11	<p>The Non-Profit Industrial Complex and Community-based Work - 1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kivel, P. (2007). Social service or social change? In <i>Incite! Women of Color against violence</i> (ed.). <i>The revolution will not be funded: Beyond the non-profit industrial complex</i> (pp. 129-149). Cambridge, MA: Sound End Press. 2. Gonzales, T. I. (2020). Ratchet-Rasquache Activism: Aesthetic and Discursive Frames within Chicago-Based Women-of-Color Activism. <i>Social Problems</i>. https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spaa034 3. The white savior industrial complex (Teju Cole) - https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/03/the-white-savior-industrial-complex/254843/ <p>Guest: Teresa Gonzales (author of the second reading)</p>
8. Mar 18	<p>The Non-Profit Industrial Complex and Community-based Work - 2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sultana, F. (2019). Decolonizing development education and the pursuit of social justice. <i>Human Geography</i>, 12(3), 31-46.

	<p>2. Getting others right – Teju Cole: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/13/magazine/getting-others-right.html</p> <p>3. A Crime Scene at the Border – Teju Cole: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/10/magazine/drowned-migrants-photo-us-mexico-border.html</p> <p>Guest: Jon Russell</p>	
9. Mar 25	<p>Activist Scholarship and Transnational Solidarities</p> <p>1. Sudbury, J., & Okazawa-Rey, M. (2015). (Eds.). Activist scholarship and the neoliberal university after 9/11. <i>Activist scholarship: Antiracism, feminism, and social change</i>. (pp 1-14). New York, NY: Routledge.</p> <p>2. Tabar, L., & Desai, C. (2017). Decolonization is a global project: From Palestine to the Americas. <i>Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society</i>, 6(1). https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/28899/21542</p> <p>3. Erakat, N. (2020). Geographies of intimacy: Contemporary renewals of Black–Palestinian solidarity. <i>American Quarterly</i>, 72(2), 471-496.</p> <p>Note: The first reading is a must. If you do find it too much to cover readings 2 and 3, you may pick one of those (although I would recommend reading both, in that order if possible).</p> <p>Guest: Amaryllis Lopez & Victor Marquiz (Elevated Thought)</p>	
10. Apr 1	<p>Decolonizing Methodologies</p> <p>Smith, L. T. (2012). <i>Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples</i> (2nd ed.). London; New York: Zed Books.</p> <p>1. Read the introduction.</p> <p>2. Read Ch. 8 – Twenty-five Indigenous Projects – <i>Review the different projects and consider the implications for community-engaged praxis in light of the topics/readings/discussions covered in this class so far.</i></p>	
CRITICAL COMMUNITY ANALYSIS PRESENTATIONS		
<p>11. Apr 8</p> <p>1. Sarah S. 2. Justin 3. Natasha 4. Jayleen 5. Michaela 6. James 7. Gianna 8. Sarah Y.</p>	<p>12. Apr 15</p> <p>1. Nicole 2. Molly 3. Anthony 4. Elsbeth 5. Alexander 6. Esmeralda 7. Sarah O. 8. Elizabeth</p>	<p>13. Apr 22</p> <p>1. Bersy 2. Ileri 3. Taylor 4. Susmitha 5. Peter 6. Benjamin 7. MaryElise</p>
14. Apr 29	Pod Portfolio Review and Wrap up	

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The focus in this class is on **co-learning and co-building** rather than on assessment and grades. Course requirements, therefore, are designed to allow for maximizing your learning opportunities over the course of the semester, which include:

- In-depth engagement with readings along with opportunities to revisit/return to readings/questions in light of new materials covered.
- Cumulative and synergistic learning, i.e., actively connecting materials across classes and reflexive engagement with individual and collective learning over the course of the semester.
- Listening to, learning from, and reflexively engaging guest speaker sessions.
- Move towards decentered and horizontal evaluations - regular pod-based mutual evaluation; metacognitive reflections, i.e., critical self-reflection on one's learning; presentations of individual and co-learning trajectories.
- Constructive and supportive peer review/evaluation as important skills for teaching and mentoring in diverse contexts.

1. COLLECTIVE POD ACTIVITIES AND CO-LEARNING (60 pts): The major requirement for the course is to actively co-build your pod and use the platform and space to deeply engage with course materials and cultivate mutual accountability. You may use a shared google folder/document and Blackboard group discussion forums (along with additional Blackboard resources or other platforms that you find useful) to help you in your shared work.

- **Journal Entries (5 x 2 = 10 pts):** Starting from Week 3 (Feb 11) through week 10 (Apr 1), you may pick **any 2 weeks** to submit a brief journey entry (approx. 1 page double-spaced) reflecting on **your critical understanding of community and community engagement as they are challenged/shift/grow over the course of the semester.**
 - These entries could be insights, meaningful experiences, take-home messages, lessons (based on/emerging from class discussions, readings, guest speakers) that ***speak to the course description and objectives as laid out on pp-2-3 of the syllabus. For example, how have the readings/discussions enhanced your awareness of your own social locations and relative privilege. What are the implications of these lessons/reflections for your ongoing or future community-based research or engagement?***
 - **Basic peer-grading guidelines:** This assignment is peer-evaluated. This means that you will evaluate, offer constructive feedback, and assign grades to each other's' journal entries. **The emphasis is on learning how to assess strengths and weaknesses and offering concrete feedback.** Following are some basic criteria for you to revise as a pod:
 - Timely submission
 - Adequacy of response (adequate length; not too superficial)
 - Centered on social justice
 - Does NOT contain any glaring inaccuracies

- Does NOT use inappropriate, demeaning or victim blaming language
- **Submission:** Each journal entry is worth **5 pts**. All journal entries must be completed by **11:59pm on the Tuesday** before class in order to allow for your pod members to review and respond to your journal entries. *Establish a submission schedule for your pod along with forms of accountability and grading. Template and more directions will be provided during the initial in-class pod break out rooms.*
- **Weekly Reading/Discussion Posts (5 x 3 = 15pts):** Starting from Week 2 (Feb 4) through week 10 (Apr 1), each pod member will be responsible for providing key arguments/cross-cutting themes/ discussion points or questions for readings in **at least three** classes during the course of the semester (approx. 1 page double spaced – can also be in the form of a list). When you do submit questions, those must be generative and elicit discussion (not have straightforward answers). Note that these **must NOT be opinion-based, but grounded in the readings**. This will help **build on your critical analytical skills** and therefore it should be treated as an opportunity to hone those skills.
 - **Basic peer-grading guidelines:** This assignment is peer-evaluated. This means that you will evaluate, offer constructive feedback, and assign grades to each other's' journal entries. ***The emphasis is on learning how to assess strengths and weaknesses and offering concrete feedback.*** Following are some basic criteria for you to revise as a pod: submitted in a timely manner, adequate length and depth, attentive to social justice, centered on the readings.
 - Points may be deducted for: a) using victim-blaming or derogatory language, b) questions that have a yes/no or straightforward answer from the readings, or c) reflections on social issues that do not consider power arrangements, or d) if the posts are not informed by readings.
 - **Submission:** Each reading/discussion post is worth **5 pts** and must be completed by **11:59pm on the Tuesday** before class in order to allow for your pod members to review and respond to these before class. *Establish a submission schedule for your pod along with forms of accountability and grading. Template and more directions will be provided during the initial in-class pod break out rooms.*

NOTE: The submission, grading, and mutual accountability schedule for the journal entries and weekly reading/discussion posts (using given template) must be submitted to me for approval/review by 11:59pm on Monday, Feb 11. This is to ensure that I have sufficient time to provide any feedback or suggestions during the Feb 11 class.

- **Notes/Appreciation/Recognition for Guests (5pts):** Getting to hear from and interact with scholar activists and community organizers is integral to this course. We will host 7 such guest events in class. It is important for us to recognize and honor the intellectual, political, creative, and emotional labor that our guests contribute towards our collective learning. Therefore, after every guest event, we will gather notes of gratitude/appreciation/recognition (could be general or specific things we learned or appreciated) and email those to the guest. **Each pod must sign up to coordinate these notes for one (out of 7) guest events over the course of the semester (during first day of class).**

- **Submission:** You will be responsible for emailing me a word document containing: a) a brief thank you note from your pod, and b) compiled notes from the class. I will then share those with the guest speaker(s). **This must be shared with guests or submitted to me no later than a week following the guest event.**
 - **Pod Portfolio (30pts):** This is a **cumulative, collective** activity. As part of this, each pod will create one portfolio with the following:
 - a) **Overview of Pod (1 paragraph, no more than half a page double spaced; 5 pts):** Write a brief statement describing your pod/members in ways that are relevant/meaningful to your pod.
 - b) **Showcasing of Pod Work/Resources (20 pts):** Towards the end of the semester, you would have submitted several journal entries and weekly reading posts along with other resources/notes along the way. For the showcasing, you are required to select a collection or collage of entries/posts etc. generated within your pod to showcase/highlight your collective pod work. In other words, select items/submissions that stood out for you, made an impression on you all as a group and/or are good exemplars of the kind of work expected in this class. **You must also provide a brief one-paragraph summary/outline of the items you have submitted (worth 5 pts).** These will also be shared through padlet to allow us to review and engage with the work of different pods (more on this later).
 - c) **Critical Reflection of Pod/Pod Activities (approx. 1.5 to 2 pages double-spaced; 10 pts):** You will conclude the portfolio with critical reflections on your pod (with reference to goals/values laid out on pp. 4-5 of the syllabus). For example, *how did you strive to create co-learning spaces within your pod? How did you offer mutual support? What are some ways in which you challenged each other's' perspectives as a collective to deepen your understanding of social (in)justice? What did you learn about community-engaged praxis and community building? What are some implications or applications of pods (structure and process) for collective praxis in other settings?*
 - **Pod Portfolio Review and Submission:** Full drafts of pod portfolios must be ready before the last class (**Thu, Apr 29**) since we will be reviewing those in that class. Each pod will briefly share the highlights from their pod (bullet point c above). The final version of the full portfolio must be submitted by **11:59pm on Sunday May 2.**
2. **CRITICAL COMMUNITY ANALYSIS PRESENTATION (30 pts):** The objective of this assignment is to apply and demonstrate your growing understanding of the critically nuanced aspects of how we think about, make assumptions, conceptualize, relate to, and work in/with community. Although the assignment will culminate in a presentation at the end of the semester, you should work on it over the course of the semester, taking notes along the way. The pod-based assignments will also contribute to this. **Note that this assignment is geared toward your own individual interests/focus/area of work.** This presentation must cover the following:
- **Critique (5 pts):** What were some of your assumptions, ideas, and conceptions of community when you started the class? Where did these ideas come from (e.g., other

courses, popular narratives, etc.)? Using course content from this class, outline/examine/critique these commonly taken-for-granted notions of community.

- **Transformations (10 pts):** How do you currently better understand and relate to the construct of community? How have your understandings shifted over the semester? Specify what contributed to these shifts (e.g., specific content such as readings/arguments, lessons from guest events, etc.)?
- **Applications (10 pts):** What are the implications of these understandings for your future community-engaged research and practice? This must focus on your particular individual trajectories. **For example:**
 - If you are a doctoral student or otherwise engaged/interested in research, you would discuss how the understandings from this class will inform your research questions (framing/conceptualization), methods, ethics, and/or broader issues around knowledge production in your particular area of inquiry.
 - If you are already engaged in community-based practice, you would discuss how your current understandings could inform your continued/future work.
 - If you are interested in specific issues or contexts of social (in)justice, you would discuss how course understandings inform your analysis of those issues.
- **Overall quality of presentation (5 pts):** Coherent, cohesive, preparedness, timed, appropriate use of content, clarity of slides.

Format/Schedule: You should prepare content for a **15-minute presentation** (no less than 13 min and must NOT exceed 15 minutes). These presentations will take place on **April 8, 15, and 22. The order of presentation was generated using a list randomizer.** If your scheduled date does not work for you because of extenuating circumstances, please reach out to your peers to see if anyone would be willing to swap with you. Please do this only if you have extenuating circumstances or possible absence and not simply based on preference.

Submission: Please submit your PowerPoint slides and write-ups/notes through the appropriate assignment portals on Blackboard. This must be submitted **no later than 11:59pm on Thu, April 29** (last day of class).

EVALUATION AND GRADING

- There will be both peer and instructor-based evaluation and grading in this class. Peer-reviewed assignments include: 1) journal entries, and 2) weekly reading/discussion posts. The rest are instructor reviewed assignments.
- There are both individual and collective effort-based assignments in this class. Individual assignments include: 1) Journal entries, 2) Weekly reading/discussion posts and 3) Critical community analysis presentation. Collective effort-based assignments include: 1) Pod portfolio and 2) Guest appreciation notes.
- Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with regards to questions about peer-grading. The best way to do this would be to schedule an appointment during office hours (sign up for 2 15-min slots). Please do not send individual emails about this.
- Grading will follow the 100% scale. (Standard math rounding applies: 88.5=89, 88.4=88 without exceptions). It is your responsibility to keep track of your scores in Blackboard.

Letter Grade	
A+	97-100
A	93-96
A-	90-92
B+	88-89
B	83-87
B-	80-82
C+	78-79
C	74-78
C-	70-73
F	0-69

I understand the need to be flexible and to be responsive to shifting contingencies, circumstances, and needs during a global pandemic. If/when these requirements seem untenable given your personal circumstances, please do not hesitate to let me know. As a group we will revisit course requirements as and when needed.

POLICIES

1. **University Privacy Policy:** I will be recording some portions of our virtual course for the purposes of making course content available for all students. Please note that recordings of classroom lectures are the intellectual property of the instructor. Instructors have the right to prohibit audio and video recording of their lectures, unless the requesting student is registered with Disabilities Services and recording of class sessions is an approved accommodation. In addition, sharing of or selling recordings of classroom activity, discussions or lectures with any other person or medium without permission of the instructor is prohibited. Massachusetts is a two-party consent state, which means it is illegal to record someone without their permission.

2. **Classroom Environment:** We will work together to create a supportive and brave space wherein we can engage meaningfully with complex issues. The classroom space is a microcosm of our social world so that our engagements and interactions are patterned by unjust social histories and norms that we encounter in the world. Therefore, we have to be intentional and mindful about creating a space that is actively disruptive of social hierarchies—implicit and tacit. While, we will work together to create more just and equal norms for our classroom, here are a few things to note:
 - **Ignorance** (as a form of explanation/justification) is not passive nor harmless (re: intent vs. impact). It is an active detachment from the kinds of knowledge that threaten one’s self-perceptions and -identities, as a consequence evading any emotional risk or vulnerability.
 - **Comfort** is an unearned privilege of those who occupy dominant social locations. The desire or demand for comfort is a form of entitlement that is inextricably intertwined with coloniality and whiteness. It is invisible to those who possess and embody it. Comfort is embodied and visceral. Comfort is occupying space as a given, comfort means not having to contend with the fatigue resulting from unfathomable colonial wounds; comfort is not having to walk about burdened with dehumanization and othering that pervade everyday discourse. When access to “comfort” is so uneven, elevating it as a norm/value/ground rule is an act of injustice.
 - **Discomfort** is not the opposite of comfort but a political-affective stance that involves foregrounding the complexities and struggles inherent in decolonial praxis. We have to learn to endure and co-exist with the discomfort that comes from having to contend with the ways in which one is complicit in particular configurations of injustice and oppression; instead of rationalizing, let the uncomfortable feelings percolate—not as personal guilt or shame—but to hold ourselves accountable to other struggles for justice and self-determination. We must constantly trouble the understandings/representations you come to while at acknowledging the political need to represent and find meaning.

3. **Attendance Policy:** These are unrepresented times. I recognize that many of us may be challenged by this unanticipated and unprecedented need for virtual classes (e.g., internet bandwidth issues, family or caregiving responsibilities, lack of safe spaces, etc.). This requires us to be creative, adaptive, and to find alternatives to traditional classroom practices.

- Attendance per se will not be graded but there are points for small group participation, so I strongly encourage you to join the class. Importantly, the small groups have been created for you to support and reinforce each other’s learning but also as a way of creating community in these challenging times.
- Whenever possible, let me know if you are going to have to miss class.
- I will have access to attendance reports from zoom, which I may use to follow up with students who have missed a significant number of classes. This would be more of a form of check in to see if you are doing alright and if you need additional support.

4. **Communication Policy:** E-mail is a great way to get in touch with me regarding any questions you have about the class. Please email me only at urmitapa_dutta@uml.edu (Note underscore between first and last name). **Do not** email me through Blackboard. Please allow enough time for me to receive and respond to your e-mail. I will do my best to respond within **1-2 business days**. I expect the same from you.

If what you ask is a good question that is relevant to the rest of the class, I will frequently address your question in class instead of responding to the e-mail. Alternatively, you may ask a question that is far too detailed or complex to be answered over e-mail. In these instances, I will suggest that you meet with me during office hours.

Before sending me an e-mail, please ask yourself: Can I answer this question myself (e.g., information is available on syllabus or Blackboard). Important emails regarding the course will be sent to your UML email accounts. If you do not check your UML email account, you should have that email forwarded to an account you do check. **I will only send emails to UML accounts.**

- Always mention the issue/topic in the subject line when you email me.
- Do not send emails without a subject/salutation.
- Whenever you upload assignments on Blackboard or email me assignments, name the file using this system:
Assignment name_your first name_last name.
- All assignments must be submitted as word documents (.doc or .docx).

5. **Policy on Late Work & Missed Exams:** Please check the assignments section for specific late policies. As a general rule, it is your responsibility to keep me informed regarding anything that may interfere with your performance in the course including meeting deadlines for assignments. I am happy to trouble shoot or brainstorm options with you so please do not wait until the last minute. We will review the late submission policies for some of the assignments as a class and come up with a collective decision regarding penalties, which will be adhered to for the rest of the semester.

6. **Incomplete Grade:** If, because of unusual circumstances, a student is unable to meet all the requirements of the course by the end of a semester, the grade of Incomplete (INC) may be given. **Responsibility for making arrangements with an instructor to complete all outstanding coursework rests entirely with the student**, who must complete all outstanding coursework by the date listed on the Graduate Academic Calendar (www.uml.edu/Registrar/Calendars/default.aspx). Under no circumstances will a student be allowed to graduate with incomplete(s) on their transcript.

If the student does not complete the missing work by the specified date and no grade change form is submitted by the instructor, the student's grade will automatically change to a grade of "F" and be computed into the GPA. Any missed final examination or other final course evaluation requires a student explanation within 48 hours so the instructor can file the proper course notation with the Student Records Office.

- 7. Academic Integrity:** This is a friendly reminder about cheating and plagiarism—don't do it! Any student who is caught cheating on an exam, writing another student's project, or copying from another source (e.g., a website, a magazine, a published research article, another student's paper) without proper citations will be disciplined under the University's regulations for academic honesty. **Note that this includes re-using your own assignments from other courses.** All work in this class must be original and not written in part or full by your friend, roommate, tutor, etc. You are welcome to work with tutors to help you to understand concepts and to develop plans for completing assignments, and who may look over work that you have done and give you feedback, **but who may not** do any of the actual work you submit. Please do not hesitate to touch base with me if you have questions or concerns about what constitutes plagiarism.

All assignments are individual assignments unless explicitly stated otherwise. Students who violate the academic principles of this University may receive a failing grade on the assignment, receive a failing grade in the course, or be suspended from the University. The University's website on academic honesty is: <https://www.uml.edu/Catalog/Graduate/Policies/Academic-Integrity.aspx>

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Tutoring Resources and Centers for Learning and Academic Support Services (CLASS)

CLASS will be offering tutoring and Writing Center services virtually this fall. [Online searchable tutoring schedules](#) are available that include resources on all campuses.

Student Mental Health and Well-being

We are a campus that cares about the mental health and well-being of all individuals in our campus community, particularly during this uncertain time. If you or someone you know are experiencing mental health challenges at UMass Lowell, please contact [Counseling Services](#) who are offering remote counseling via telehealth for all enrolled, eligible UMass Lowell students who are currently residing in Massachusetts or New Hampshire. I am available to talk with you about stresses related to your work in my class. For additional information on the **Wellness Center**, visit: <https://www.uml.edu/student-services/wellness-center/>.

UMASS Lowell Navigators' Food Pantry

Please visit the food pantry located in University Crossing, room 104 if you need assistance securing food; we are open Monday-Friday from 3pm-7pm. All you need is your student ID to access the food pantry; there is no charge for food, toiletries, or other resources we offer. For additional information visit: <https://www.uml.edu/student-services/additional-resources/navigators-food-pantry.aspx>.

Disability Services

If you have a documented disability that will require classroom accommodations, please notify me as soon as possible, so that we might make appropriate arrangements. Please speak to me during office hours or send me an email, as I respect, and want to protect, your privacy. Visit the [Student Disability Services webpage](#) for further information. Additionally, Student Disability Services supports software for ALL students. Read&Write Gold is literacy software that allows you to read on-screen text aloud, research and check written work, and create study guides. You can download the software from the IT Software webpage on the UML website: [IT Software page](#)

Veterans' Services

For complete information on the services and resources available please visit our website at: <https://www.uml.edu/student-services/Veterans/>

UMASS Lowell Police Department

The UMass Lowell Police Department is a full-service police department that operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Please dial 978-934-4911 in case of emergency; for non-emergencies dial 978-934-2398. The UMLPD is located in the "B" Building of University Crossing on the 1st floor.