FYC4126 Urban and Rural Communities in Transition

Spring, 2026

Keene-Flint Hall (FLI 0117)
In Class Lectures and Discussion, Monday and Wednesday Period 2 8:30 AM – 9:20 AM
Online Individual Assignments and Team Project Meetings, Friday Period 2 8:30 – 9:20 AM
3 credit hours

Instructor

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Preferred contact method: CANVAS email, by appointment

Schedule appointment: https://fycsadvising.acuityscheduling.com

Zoom or in-person office hours, Wednesday, 2:30-3:30 PM, 3005 McCarty Hall D

Zoom office hours, Friday, Period 2 8:30 AM- 9:20 AM (Provide Individual & Team Assistance)

Course Description

Communities in America are being confronted with a number of significant changes. Such shifts are not felt in the same manner across various regions or communities in the US. Explore current and emerging issues that have differential consequences for urban and rural areas in this country

Course Learning Objectives

After completing this course students will be able to:

1.   Articulate the issues faced by rural and urban communities.

2.   Explain the impact of community transition on the emerging issues for these communities.

3.   Compare/contrast different approaches that address these issues at the community level.

Course Overview and Purpose

This course will include lectures, discussions, small group activities, in-class exercises, written assignments, ten team updates, team research paper, and two case studies.

Course Prerequisites
SYG 2000 and FYC 3001 and FYC 3401 with minimum grades of C and FYC major

Textbooks and Learning Materials
Readings: Instructors will provide supplemental readings from other textbooks, research papers, journal articles and contemporary publications that will be used to enhance the student's understanding of concepts and issues discussed in the course. PDF files for these readings will be uploaded to CANVAS and will be housed in Weekly Modules.

Access to the APA Manual (7th ed.) is recommended. Any assignments that utilize referenced materials must use the citation method (in-text and references) outlined in the 7th edition of the APA Manual.

Instructional materials for this course consist of only those materials specifically reviewed, selected, and assigned by the instructor(s). The instructor(s) is only responsible for these instructional materials."

Other Resources: This course utilizes CANVAS for all course access including the online component, weekly course schedule, additional materials, announcements, and course grades.

Grading Policy
Course grading is consistent with UF grading policies.

Course Grading Structure

Assignment Type	Point Value	Percent of Final Grade
Community Success Story Project	300	30
Online 1 Reflection	50	5
Online 2 reflection	50	5
Online 3 Reflection	50	5
Research Paper	300	30
Story of Self	100	10
4 Online Reflections (25 pts. Each)	100	10
Case Study 1	200	20
Case Study 2	200	20
Team Participation (10@ 5 Pt. each)	50	5
Individual class engagement and team project/presentation contribution	50	5

Grading Scale

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Grade	Points	Percentage
A	930-1000	93-100
A-	900-929	90-92.9
B+	870-899	87-89.9
B	830-869	83-86.9
B-	800-829	80-82.9
C+	770-799	77-79.9
C	730-769	73-76.9
C-	700-729	70-72.9
D+	670-699	67-69.9
D	630-669	63-66.9
D-	600-629	60-62.9
S	<600	<60

Assignments

1. **Group Research Paper (300 points)** Each class team will write a research paper on a specific city or rural town, county, or community.

   Part 1 (worth 150 points). The class team will write a research paper that focuses on a specific rural or urban town, suburb, city, county, parish, or region.   In Part 1 of the paper, you will identify and describe the rural or urban community in detail, utilizing the asset-based community development approach and by selecting a community development model to follow in your research and implementation approach. The paper, at minimum, will include the following:

   a. Community Profile. This should include population, types of people, distribution number, density, SES, education levels, government services available, infrastructure, land areas, and other salient facts.
   b. What important assets do the city, town, suburb, county/parish, or region have that defines the community?
   c. Identify and document major issues/problems facing the community. Support with appropriate Census and other relevant data. (Describe these issues as if they relate to the community).
   d. Provide any relevant historical data that may clarify the issues as they exist within the community. (e.g. Does the community suffer from a lack of infrastructure, human capital, natural resources, financial capital, social capital, political capital, etc.).
   e. Explain why you selected this community. (Why is this community meaningful to you?)

Part 2 (worth 150 points). The class team will dig deeper into one of the major issues faced by the specific community that was described in Part 1. For this part of the paper, you will identify one of the "wicked" issues facing that community, utilize a community development model to address the issue, and research how other communities have worked to address a similar issue. This section will provide the following:

a.   Explain the issue using "wicked issues" characteristics put together by Rittel and Weber (1973).
b.   Is this an issue at local, state, national, and international levels or is it unique to this city, town, suburb, county/parish, or region? Provide evidence and examples to support your answer.
c.   With your new knowledge of communities and community development what do you believe would be the approaches (technical, conflict, self-help) and potential solutions to the issue facing the community?
d.   What community assets and community development model (optional Community Development Models will be provided during class lectures) are you using to address this issue? The format for this section will depend on the community development model your team chooses to use to address the community issue.
e.   Who in the community and outside of the community should be involved in addressing the issue?
f.   How will you involve organizations and members of the community in addressing this issue?
g.   What are some potential obstacles to addressing this issue? How will you overcome them?
h.   Identify how other communities are addressing this issue? Have they been successful? Have they been replicated? Can they be modified to work in the community you chose?
i.   Would methods use in other communities work in your community? Why or why not?
j.   Provide summary, conclusions and any reflection on the community and issue you have addressed.

2.   **Story of Self, Us, and Now (100 points).** Students will write a short story of self, based on the readings of Marshall Ganz. Each student will provide a reflection of their past, what issues they are concerned about and why the issue is important to them now.

3.   **Online papers. (100 points).** Students will prepare 4 (1.5-2-page reflection papers) based on assignments for their Friday, online sessions. See schedule below for when these assignments are due.

4.   **Case Study (200 points):** The During Class Period Case Study will be based on class readings and classroom discussion. You will be provided with a real-life community case study and will use material that you have learned up to this point to provide your answer to the real-life community issue.

5.   **Case Study (200 points):** The During Class Period Case Study will be based on class readings and classroom discussion. You will be provided with a real-life community case study and will use material that you have learned up to this point to provide your answer to the real-life community issue.

6.   **Team accountability and Success (100 points).** Team accountability and success will consist of two elements. The first includes 10 weekly team updates at 5 pts each in which one member of your team will provide an update via CANVAS on select Fridays for a total of (50 points). The second 50 points will consist of engagement in class discussions and the team research paper and presentation.

Weekly Course Schedule
Schedule may change due to unforeseen circumstances. Please refer to announcements and updates that will be provided in CANVAS.

Week	Date	Topics	Readings & Materials	Assignments & Due Dates
1	M 1/12	*Syllabus Day: Course Overview*	**CANVAS Module 1**	
	W 1/14	What is Community? Approaches to understanding community.		Do your own research to answer, "What is Community?"
	F 1/16			Work Online Begin Online Assignment 1: Resource Quest
2	M 1/19	No Class	University Holliday	No Class
	W 1/21	Capital Community Framework & Community Assets	**CANVAS Module 2** In Class Assignment: Draw the community you grew up in.	Determine your community research interest?
	F 1/23	Online Activity	Online Resources provided for Story of Self	Work Online Story of Self, Us, and Now
3	M 1/26		**CANVAS Module 3**	
	W 1/28	Defining rural, urban, and suburban communities Project teams will be assigned	What is Rural? What is Urban? (USDA, 2016) https://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/what-is-rural http://www.urban.org/ US Census https://www.census.gov	Story about Self, Us, and Now Due Begin Online Assignment 2: What is Rural/Urban
	F 1/30	Team Project	Online Resources provided	Work Online Team Project **Team Update One Due**

4	M 2/2	The Community Development Process	**CANVAS Module 4**	**Assignment 1 Resource Quest Due**
	W 2/4		https://www.nifa.org	Begin Online Assignment 3: Wicked Issue selection
	F **2/6**	Team Project	Online Resources provided	**Work Online Team Project Team Update Two Due**
5	M 2/9	Citizenship Participation & Civic Engagement	**CANVAS Module 5**	**Online Assignment 2 Due**
	W 2/11	The Ecological Model		
	F 2/13	Team Project	Online Resources provided	**Work Online Team Project Team Update Three Due**
6	**M 2/16**	Community Case Study Evaluation #1 –	**CANVAS Module 6**	**Work online**
	W 2/18			**Work Online Community Case Study Evaluation #1 Due**
	F 2/20	Team Project	Online Resources provided	**Work Online Team Project Team Update Four Due**
7	M 2/23	Understanding Urban Issues	**CANVAS Module 7**	
	W 2/25	Understanding Rural Issues		Begin Online Assignment #4 Attend public meeting online & provide synopsis
	F 2/27	Team Project		**No Class Team Update Five Due**
10	M 3/2	Using a systems approach to complex problems	**CANVAS Module 10**	
	W 3/4	Building Communities		
	F 3/6	Team Project	Online Resources provided	**Work Online Team Project Team Update Eight Due**

11	M 3/9		**CANVAS Module 11**	**Online Assignment #4 Due**
	W 3/11	During class Community Case Study Evaluation #2	During class Community Case Study Evaluation #2	**During class Community Case Study Evaluation #2 Due**
	F 3/13	Team Project	Online Resources provided	**Work Online Team Project Team Update Nine Due**
12	M 3/16	Spring Break – Class does not meet		
	W 3/18	Spring Break – Class does not meet		
	F 3/20	Spring Break – Class does not meet	Online Resources provided	**Work Online Team Project**
13	M 3/23	Collaborating with community-based organizations	**CANVAS Module 12**	
	W 3/25			
	F 3/27	Work Online Team Project	Work Online Team Project	Work Online Team Project
14	**M 3/30**	What Community Engagement means to you	**CANVAS Module 13**	
	W 4/1			
	F 4/3	Work Online Team Project	Work Online Team Project	Work Online Team Project
15	M **4/6**	Apply Community Engagement	Teams Finalize research paper and prepare presentation	Teams Finalize research paper and prepare presentation
	W **4/8**		Teams Finalize research paper and prepare presentation	Teams Finalize research paper and prepare presentation
	F 4/10	Work Online Team Project	Work Online Team Project	Work Online Team Project

16	M 4/13	*Team Class Presentations*	*Team Class Presentations*	*Team Class Presentations*
	W 4/15	*Team Class Presentations*	*Team Class Presentations*	*Team Class Presentations*
	F 4/17	Work Online Team Project	Work Online Team Project	Work Online Team Project
17	M 4/20	*Team Class Presentations*	*Team Class Presentations*	*Team Class Presentations*
	W 4/22	*Team Class Presentations* "Team Celebrations Class Evaluations	*Team Class Presentations*	*Team Class Presentations* Team Research Paper Due Team PowerPoint Due Team Peer Evaluation Due

Academic Policies and Resources

Academic policies for this course are consistent with university policies. See https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/

Campus Health and Wellness Resources

Visit https://one.uf.edu/whole-gator/topics for resources that are designed to help you thrive physically, mentally, and emotionally at UF.

Please contact UMatterWeCare for additional and immediate support.

Software Use

All faculty, staff and students of the university are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

Technical Support

UF Computing Help Desk & Ticket Number: All technical issues require a UF Helpdesk Ticket Number. The UF Helpdesk is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/ | 352-392-4357