DCS 300: Public Problem Solving
Fall 2021
Instructor: Dr. Molly Kerby (check spelling of last name)
Email: molly.kerby@wku.edu
Office Hours:
- Just about any time Monday – Friday; email or text to make an appointment

Office Locations: WAB 224/Grise Hall 119
Phone Contacts
- Cell: (**Best method BUT text first**): (270) 991.9954;
- My Office Phone: (270) 745.8803

Required Texts:
- All materials will be available on Blackboard – no cost to you!

IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ THE SYLLABUS. DO NOT ASK ME ANYTING ABOUT THE CLASS UNTIL YOU LOOK FOR THE ANSWER HERE FIRST.

Course Overview: Public Problem Solving is an investigation of historical perspectives and theoretical dimensions of public problem solving with attention to the development of collective power, capacities, and responsibilities. The course explores the process by which problems arise and how they function within a system or series of systems. The methods employed for achieving this emerge out of both the natural and social sciences, in particular community-based research (CBR), which involves qualitative strategies and comparative interpretation. The course adopts the notion that CBR increases the knowledge and understanding of public problems and integrates the information gained with empowerment, social capital, and policy change to improve the health and quality of communities. The collaborative approach of CBR equitably involves all partners in the research process, recognizes the unique strengths that each brings, and integrates theory with practice.

"Public problems" refer to any of a range of multifaceted problems with shifting conditions and complex interdependencies and integrate the natural and social systems. For example, how do we move beyond sustainability in terms of the ecological and social environment? What factors create resilience among communities? How do we build protective factors in communities to mediate risk and resilience? What roles do national policy and systems thinking play in resilience thinking? How and why do systems change? How do we create resilience and sustainability within a system? What makes a "good" community leader? Why is leadership important? These questions guide the course goals.

Student Learning Outcomes: Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to do the following:
- Articulate the basic concepts of systems theory in terms of resilience thinking.
- Interpret key theoretical perspectives/models shaping the development/evolution of resilience.
- Compare the study of individual components of problem solving to the analysis of entire systems.
- Evaluate how systems-level thinking enhances public problem-solving and the resilience of the community.

General Education/Colonnade: This course fulfills the *Systems* requirement under *Connections* in the Colonnade Program. The course is designed to address the following outcomes:
- Analyze how systems evolve

- Compare the study of individual components to the analysis of entire systems.
- Evaluate how system-level thinking informs decision-making, public policy, and/or the sustainability of the system itself.

Diversity & Community Studies Major: DCS 300: Public Problem Solving is a core course for the undergraduate major in Diversity & Community Studies. For more information on the major, visit our website. The major has moved to the Department of Sociology & Criminology.

Important Dates:

Last day to add a class or to drop one with a full refund:	Tuesday, August 30
60% point:	Sunday, October 27
Last day to drop a class with a grade of W (fee applies):	Monday, November 1

Students who stop attending class before the 60% point will be assigned an FN rather than an F

Covid-19
All students are strongly encouraged to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Out of respect for the health and safety of the WKU community and in adherence with CDC guidelines and practices of all public universities and colleges in Kentucky, the University requires that a cloth face covering (reusable or disposable) that covers both the nose and mouth must be worn at all times when in public areas within all buildings. Students must properly wear face coverings while in class regardless of the room size or the nature of the classroom activities. Students who fail to wear a face covering as required will be in violation of the WKU Student Code of Conduct and will be asked to comply or will face disciplinary action, including possible dismissal from the University. Accommodations can be requested in special cases through the Student Accessibility and Resource Center (SARC) and must be documented before a student may attend class: 270-745-5004 (voice), 270-745-3030(TTY), or 270-288-0597 (video).

All students must immediately report a positive Covid-19 test result or close contact with a person who has tested positive to the Covid-19 Assistance Line at 270-745-2019. The assistance line is available to answer questions regarding any Covid-19 related issue. This guidance is subject to change based on requirements set forth by public health agencies or the office of the governor. Please refer to the Healthy on the Hill website for the most current information.

Resolving Complaints about Grades
The first step in resolving a complaint about grades is for the student to attempt to resolve the problem directly with the course instructor. See the Student Handbook for additional guidance.

Title IX Misconduct/Assault Statement
Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU's Title IX Sexual Misconduct/Assault Policy (#0.2070) and the Discrimination and Harassment Policy (#0.2040) at https://www.wku.edu/policies/docs/251.pdf.

Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson, 270-745-5398 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121.

Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are "Responsible Employees" of the University and **MUST** report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center at 270-745-3159.

ADA Accommodation Statement
In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, 1074. SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at sarc.connect@wku.edu . Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

WKU Syllabus Links: For more information and policies pertaining to Sexual Harassment, Title IX, Inclusive Spaces, etc., visit WKU Syllabus Information

Course Requirements:
Evaluation: Students must satisfactorily complete the following requirements in order to pass this course.

Grade   distribution
90-100% = A
80-89% = B
70-79% = C
60-69% = D
59 or below = F

Class Participation:
This class *usually* functions as a forum in which participants engage the readings and exchange ideas, interpretations, and insights with each other. Since we are in an asynchronistic online environment, we will have to be creative to make this happen. The success of this format, therefore, depends on everyone's preparation and participation; To that end, I expect you to participate in all class activities and discussions. Successful participation requires that you complete the reading, do your homework, and actively engaging the course material. I expect to be an active participant and fully participate in class projects. You are also expected to be respectful to your classmates and the professor. Failure to do so will result in points deducted from your overall grade. Please remember that we all have a right to interpret materials as we wish as long as critical thought is involved. You will be assigned to teams for class presentations, group discussions, and community projects. You are expected to be professional, a team player, and respectful.

Course Components: The course is divided into three parts; each address specific student learning outcomes (SLOs).

Part 1: Analyze how systems evolve
- SLO: Articulate the basic concepts of systems theory in terms of resilience thinking.
- SLO: Interpret key theoretical perspectives/models shaping the development and evolution of resilience.

Assignments addressing outcomes for part 1.
- **Quizzes**: You will be given low-stakes quizzes (meaning - not worth a ton of points) that cover all the basic information. Like any other field of study, it's important to fully understand the basic building blocks before you build "the house." In other words, the concepts and theories presented in the first portion of the course are extremely important.
- **Blackboard Discussions**: You instructor will pose questions for you to answer on Blackboard. In groups, you will answer and discuss.

Midterm exam:
- The midterm examine will cover readings from the first part of the course. There will be true/false,

multiple choice, and short essay questions. All lecture notes will be posted on Blackboard.

Part 2: Compare the study of individual components to the analysis of entire systems
- SLO: Compare the study of individual components of problem solving to the analysis of entire systems.

Assignments addressing outcomes for part 2.

Project-based Civic Engagement Project:
- Students will conduct, in a small group, a civic engagement project using the principles of community-based participatory methodologies. Students are expected to engage in a systematic inquiry, work as a team, and collaborate with a community partner and their stakeholders (since we might be limited due to Covid, we will work out details as we go). More about this project will be discussed in class.

Group Presentation of Civic Engagement Project:
- Presentations covering each aspect of the community project should be no more than 25-30 minutes long and recorded in an electronic format we can all access. Zoom always works. A detailed assignment will be distributed.

Part 3: Evaluate how system-level thinking informs decision-making, public policy, and/or the sustainability of the system itself.
- SLO: Evaluate how systems-level thinking enhances public problem-solving and the resilience of the community.

Assignment addressing outcome for part 3.

Final Paper – A Final Critical Synthesis:
All papers must be in Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-space, and in APA format. In this paper, please avoid using first person ("I") since the assignment is to write about "others" not yourself. Be sure to include a title page (again, see APA format). Please see your syllabus for writing format in this class. The minimum length of the paper should be about 3 pages; excluding the reference page. Details for this final paper will be outlined in class.

Course Notes:

Format for Written Assignments:
All written assignments must be typed (in a standard 12-point font size) and double-spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides. Each written assignment should have a title. Your name, the course name and section, the due date, and my name should appear in the upper left-hand corner. Assignments should be stapled and pages should be numbered. Please us **APA format** for incorporating and citing outside sources. All assignments should be either be submitted in hard copy at the beginning of class on the due date or via Blackboard (You will be notified as to preferred method). This will be discussed in class.

Course Policies:
Late Assignments: Assignments and quizzes not be available or accepted after due date. Period. If you have extenuating circumstances, however, please reach out. I do understand things happen – especially with our world health and the pandemic on shaky ground.

Academic Integrity:
It is understood that students will present their own work for all assignments. Student work will be checked using plagiarism detection software. Plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty will result in either failure of the assignment or failure of the course. I also reserve the right to use the university plagiarism/cheating policy (below). University plagiarism/cheating policy:

There is no tolerance for plagiarism or cheating at the university. The university requires faculty   to report any dishonest work, and the student could both fail the course and possibly be expelled from the university. This policy will be practiced in this course. If you are not familiar with the university plagiarism policy you may access it here.

In addition, please know I define cheating and plagiarism very strictly. For example, I consider it plagiarism if you did not write any one section of your work (whether you "borrowed" it from a source or had someone else write it for you for example). I also consider it cheating when a student "recycles" papers written for another professor and/or another class. Everything you write for this class should be an original piece of work specifically written by you (the student) for this course. If any materials are not properly cited "in-text" or a reference page included, I will consider that omission as an attempt to plagiarize. If you are not sure how to do these things, see me and I will help.

Writing Center Assistance:
The Writing Center is your friend!! The Writing Center is located in Cherry Hall 123 on the Bowling Green campus and also offers online consultations for students who live at a distance or who cannot visit during our operating hours. Our writing tutors have been trained to provide helpful feedback to students at all phases of a writing project: they can help you brainstorm ideas, structure your essay, clarify your purpose, strengthen your support, and edit for clarity and correctness. But they will not revise or edit the paper for you. See instructions on the website for making online or face-to-face appointments. Or call (270) 745- 5719 during our operating hours (also listed on our website) for help scheduling an appointment.

Student Assistance/Tutoring:
Should you require academic assistance with this course, or any other General Education Course, there are several places that can provide help. The Learning Center, located in the Academic Advising and Retention Center, DUC A-330, has tutors in most major undergraduate subjects and course levels throughout the week—they can also direct you to one of many tutoring and assistance Centers across campus. To make an appointment, or request a tutor for a specific class, call (270)745-6254 or stop by DUC A-330. Log on to TLC's web site for tutoring for students at a distance. TLC hours are listed on their site:

Counseling and Testing Center:
We believe that the university experience should be challenging, not overwhelming, and universities have a duty to support students as they are being challenged. To this end, the WKU Counseling and Testing Center is committed to promoting the academic mission of the university by providing a variety of psychological services to students that will augment recruitment, retention, and graduation by strengthening students' capacity to tolerate distress, form healthy relationships, and seek healthy expressions of their ideals and values. The Counseling and Testing Center also advances the university's mission by providing educational programming, training, and consultation to the students, faculty, staff, and constituents of WKU.

- The Counseling and Testing Center is open from Monday – Friday from 8:00am-4:30pm. Emergency and after-hours appointments may be made by calling 270-745-3159. The Counseling and Testing Center is open throughout the calendar year and closed during holidays and other specified dates can be found here.

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