

Bass Connections: Strengthening Families Across Contexts
Fridays 10am-12pm
RC 319

Instructor: Justin Rasmussen (he/him), call me Justin
Email: justin.rasmussen@duke.edu
Office Hours: Email me or talk to me after class to schedule an appointment
Co-instructors: Maeve Salm (she/hers), call me Maeve (maeve.salm@duke.edu)
Eve Puffer (she/hers), call me Dr. Puffer (eve.puffer@duke.edu)

Welcome to the Strengthening Families Bass Team!

By participating in this course, you are joining a community of study teams that includes students at multiple levels, research staff, and community members in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Eldoret, Kenya. You will get to be an active part of our work to address global mental health inequalities, understand the theory behind family-based interventions, and see multiple phases of project development and implementation. You'll get deep into the inner-workings of community-based research on your project-team. You'll also get to see research from a broader perspective from outside the academy and across cultures.

Course foundations

While we will draw on various disciplines to inform our work in this course, we will ground our approach in Community Psychology. While it is a diverse field, Jacob Tebes (2016) tebe offers these as its organizing principles:

- P1. Considering individual and systems change, including first order versus second order change
- P2. Understanding social ecological levels of analysis and intervention
- P3. Focusing on strengths, wellness, and competence (vs. deficits and disorder), including an emphasis (at individual and collective levels) on prevention, resilience, and health promotion
- P4. Valuing and promoting empowerment and social justice, including liberation from oppression
- P5. Understanding human diversity and cultural contexts
- P6. Advancing participatory action, including stakeholder participation, multi-level collaboration, and sense of community
- P7. Developing empirically based models for action
- P8. Advancing theoretical and methodological pluralism

This course, like our research projects, has been deeply informed by these principles. Aligned with these principles, this course has the following goals:

1. Describe the steps involved in conducting community-based intervention research in diverse cultural settings including fostering partnerships, data collection and management, implementation, and dissemination (All levels).
2. Be able to describe the principles in community psychology and apply these to all phases of the research process from initial planning to dissemination (All levels).
3. Develop an understanding of collaboration through active participation and reflection on your contribution to various levels of this project. (P1, P2, P6)
4. Learn and apply research techniques on your project team, including consulting communities, academic literature, and learning from data analysis in collaboration with others on a multi-disciplinary team. (P7, P8)
5. Reflect on your research project within the history, theory, and current scope of community-based research. (P4, P5)

Class Format

Since this is a project-based learning course, the majority of our time will be focused on team-based learning activities on one of two community-based family-strengthening intervention projects:

1. Tuko Pamoja in Eldoret, Kenya

2. Coping Together in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA

This format is not only practical preparation for research careers where teamwork is essential, it also resonates with the collaborative approach we will be taking in all of our work (P6). This class is a shared work of learning. Your individual learning will happen within a process of classroom learning which is itself embedded in our ongoing projects of community learning in Eldoret and Milwaukee.

The second hour every week, you will meet as a project team to work on various assignments. The first hour will vary, with a greater focus on presentations, readings, and skills training early on in the semester, moving toward briefer check-ins and additional project team time later in the semester.

What are your responsibilities in our shared learning?

We expect you to participate actively individually, in our course, and in our community research projects. We will work together to develop a set of expectations together. At a minimum these will include the following:

- Work toward your learning goals. You will meet with your team leader at the beginning of the year to define these goals. Bring to this meeting your own goals as well as things the instructor can do to help you fully participate in the class.
- Reflect on your participation throughout the course. You will need to submit a graded reflection assignment each semester. Our hope is that this assignment will be a consolidation of your ongoing reflection throughout the course. (P5)
- Complete individual, class, and team assignments on time. As much as possible, we have laid these out in our course plan. You will also have work on your team will develop along with your participation in the project.
- Be present and actively participate in all class and team meetings.

Assessment

This class will include four major components. Since this is a project-based course with shared learning as a primary objective, the emphasis is on active participation in all class and team activities (75% of your grade). The remaining 25% of your grade will be focused on your individual goals, the intervention breakdown, and the reflection assessment.

1. Active Participation in Class Activities (25%)

Class discussions and presentations are designed to help you see your individual project within the broader context of community psychology research. Your engagement with presenters and with each other is therefore a core part of your learning in this course. Our expectation is that you will be present, prepared, and engaged in class meetings. To receive full credit, you will need to meaningfully contribute to class learning each week. Meaningful contributions can include asking good questions, making observations, helping someone solve a problem, bringing your own specific challenge, or connecting different thoughts. We understand you may have "off" weeks so 2 weeks can be dropped, including absences. If we have concerns about your participation in any given week, instructors will check in with you.

2. Active Participation in Project Team Activities (50%)

Participation in project teams is the primary focus of learning in this course. Each week, team leaders will provide feedback on your work each week and will work with you to identify tasks for the next week. Our expectation is that you will complete assignments for your project team, communicate about challenges, and collaborate effectively on shared responsibilities. Team leaders will assess whether you met these expectations each week, checking in with you if there are any concerns. Once again, you will have two weeks of grace.

3. Intervention breakdown assessment (5%)

You will be tasked with presenting a part of your project with your project team. This will be graded based on your demonstration of understanding of the project.

4. Individual assessment goals (10%)

Since you are all at different places in your education, each of you will meet with your team leader to discuss and commit to individual learning goals and assessments. This will include setting 3 goals for this course, agreeing on an assessment plan for these goals, and.

5. Reflection assessment (10%)

At the end of the semester, you will complete a reflection assessment applying the principles of Community Psychology to your experience. By default, this will be a 3-page paper but you can plan with your project team leader to do this in another manner if you prefer.

The grading scale is as follows (round up at 0.5):

A+: 100-98	A: 97-93	A-: 92-90
B+: 89-87	B: 86-83	B-: 82-80
C+: 79-77	C: 76-73	C-: 72-70
D+: 69-67	D: 66-63	D-: 62-60
F: 59 and below		

Class Topics and Readings

Early on, as project team assignments ramp up, you will be assigned some structured assignments and readings. After the first month, class work will transition mostly to your project team. Readings and assignments should be completed *in advance* of the date for which they are listed. Materials will be posted in Canvas at least one week before they are due.

Date	First hour topic	Assignments	Leader
Aug 30	Class Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete project onboarding 	Class: Justin TP: Justin CT: Maeve
Sep 6	Family interventions: A theory of change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Readings in Zotero Learning goals sheet 	Class: Dr. Puffer TP: Justin CT: Maeve
Sep 13	Qualitative analysis lab	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Readings in Zotero Read assigned transcript Open Nvivo and get familiar 	Class: Maeve TP: Justin CT: Maeve
Sep 20	Qualitative analysis lab (cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nvivo task from class Read assigned transcript 	Class: Maeve TP: Dr. Puffer CT: Maeve
Sep 27	Culture & Adaptation: Guest lecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Readings in Zotero 	Class: Justin TP: Justin CT: Dr. Puffer
Oct 4	Project teams		TP: Justin CT: Maeve
Oct 11	Project presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present intervention breakdown 	Class: Justin TP: Justin CT: Dr. Puffer
Oct 18	Project teams		TP: Justin CT: Dr. Puffer
Oct 25	Project teams		TP: Justin CT: Maeve
Nov 1	Project teams		TP: Dr. Puffer CT: Maeve
Nov 8	Project teams		TP: Justin

			CT: Maeve
Nov 15	Class discussion, Project teams		TP: Justin CT: Maeve
Nov 22	Class discussion, Project teams		TP: Justin CT: Maeve
Nov 29	No class: Thanksgiving break		
Dec 6	Reflection and wrap-up	• Reflection papers due	Class: Justin TP: Dr. Puffer CT: Maeve

Course Policies

Class Attendance

You are expected to attend all scheduled classes. If you need to miss class, you will be expected to follow [Trinity College's policies](#), provide appropriate documentation, and communicate with the instructor team. You may discuss absences not covered by these policies with the instructor team. Your first two unexcused absences will count as "off" weeks for participation and will not factor into your grade, after that each subsequent week will result in a zero for attendance on that day. Uncommunicated absences and uncompleted tasks will result in similar penalties to your team participation grade if they impact the team's progress.

Missed Work and Extensions

Timelines for your project tasks may be hard to predict. The important thing will be for you to communicate consistently with your team leader each week. If you need an extension on non-project assignments, discuss this with the instructor team before the due date to avoid a penalty. Unless discussed, you will lose 5% of the total possible points for that assignment per day of late submission. Submissions more than a week after our last assignment is due will not be accepted.

Academic Support

The university offers resources to support students in managing daily stress and self-care. Duke also offers several resources for students to seek assistance on coursework and to nurture daily habits that support overall well-being, some of which are listed below.

- The Academic Resource Center: (919) 684-5917, theARC@duke.edu, or arc.duke.edu.
- DuWell: (919) 681-8421, provides Moments of Mindfulness (stress management and resilience building) and meditation programming (Koru workshop) to assist students in developing a daily emotional well-being practice. To see schedules for programs please see <https://studentaffairs.duke.edu/duwell>. All are welcome and no experience necessary.

Accommodations

If you need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to register with the Student Disability Access Office (SDAO) and provide them with documentation of your disability. SDAO will work with you to determine what accommodations are appropriate for your situation. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and disability accommodations cannot be provided until a Faculty Accommodation Letter has been given to us. Please contact SDAO for more information: sdao@duke.edu or access.duke.edu.

Mental Health & Wellness

Student mental health and wellness are of primary importance at Duke, especially in the Department of Psychology & Neuroscience. Being a student can be stressful. If you or someone you know is having a hard time, please let us know if I can assist you in connecting to support.

If your mental health concerns and/or stressful events negatively affect your daily emotional state, academic performance, or ability to participate in your daily activities, many resources are available to help you through difficult times. Duke encourages all students to access these resources.

- DukeReach. Provides comprehensive outreach services to identify and support students in managing all aspects of well-being. If you have concerns about a student's behavior or health visit the website for resources and assistance: <https://students.duke.edu/wellness/dukereach/>
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). CAPS services include individual and group counseling services, psychiatric services, and workshops. To initiate services, walk-in/call-in 9-4 M,W,Th,F and 9-6 Tuesdays. CAPS also provides referral to off- campus resources for specialized care. (919) 660-1000 or <https://students.duke.edu/wellness/caps/>
- TimelyCare (formerly known as Blue Devils Care). An online platform that is a convenient, confidential, and free way for Duke students to receive 24/7 mental health support through TalkNow and scheduled counseling.

References

Tebes, J. K. (2016). Reflections on the Future of Community Psychology from the Generations after Swampscott: A Commentary and Introduction to the Special Issue. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 58(3-4), 229-238. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12110>