

CARLETON UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY
SOCI 2180A /ANTH 2180A
2026 FALL
FOUNDATIONS IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Instructor: Dr. Cihan Erdal

Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:30 to 13:30 pm by appointment & via Zoom.

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Brightspace course page link: <https://brightspace.carleton.ca/d2l/home/452879>

Pre-requisites & Precluded Courses: Second year status or permission of instructor

Method of Delivery: In-person

In this course, you are expected to learn from your texts, your teacher and from one another. This requires striving towards understanding each other but it does not imply striving towards finding agreement. Our class will be racially, religiously, politically, culturally, generationally, and economically diverse. We will be of different gender identifications and sexual orientations and our lived experiences and reactions to the course material will reflect this diversity. Sharing our perspectives and interpretations on the course material will enhance everyone's learning experience and you are encouraged to openly express any disagreements with the authors you will read, with your fellow classmates, or with the Professor in the different participation fora that are available for this course. However, you are expected to conduct yourself in such a way that shows the utmost respect to others who may – or may not – share your views. Derogatory comments and hateful behavior towards others (and their views) will not be tolerated.

Carleton University acknowledges the location of its campus on the traditional, unceded territories of the Algonquin nation. In doing so, Carleton acknowledges it has a responsibility to the Algonquin people and a responsibility to adhere to Algonquin cultural protocols.

Instructor Communication Policy: All course announcements from the instructor will be communicated through the course Brightspace page. Students are strongly encouraged to use office hours to discuss concerns, questions, and other issues one-on-one with the instructor. Students who are unavailable to meet during office hours or who have urgent queries may email the instructor from their Carleton University email account. Include the course code in the subject line.

Before sending an email you should:

- Consult the Course Outline and relevant Detailed Assignment Briefs
- Check the Brightspace course page for announcements

Please allow up to 48 hours Monday-Friday for a response.

For technical support for Brightspace please visit <https://carleton.ca/brightspace/students/> and for cuPortfolio please visit <https://carleton.ca/cuportfoliosupport/>.

Course Description and Objectives:

Calendar Description: Study of theoretical debates and practical applications relating to community engagement with a focus on Canadian examples. Exploration of the contested and complex meanings of community engagement in and between diverse communities, public institutions, non-profit sector and private enterprise with an emphasis on social justice. Includes: Experiential Learning Activity.

Course overview: Have you ever been part of a community which needed a voice in creating change? Community engagement is the process by which communities can achieve common goals, organizations can ensure they are meeting their constituency needs, businesses can work to align with community values, and governments can engage citizens on proposed policies and laws. As a student at Carleton for example, you experience this engagement when you get involved in student-led activities and initiatives.

In this course, we will explore notions of “community,” “engagement,” and “community engagement” –terms which are popularly thought of as positive, but which are also replete with contradictions and contestations as they are applied in diverse settings. We will learn to work theoretically and contextually with these terms through readings and discussions. You will also do some experiential learning by joining a small community engagement process to (i) contribute, (ii) enjoy the satisfactions of community engagement work and, (iii) analyze the processes involved. Our project this year will be with CAFES (Community Associations For Environmental Sustainability). Students will be working in small groups each with a community association (CA) to create one or more community engagement tools for the CA.

This might include a short video or an infographic. My goal in this course is to introduce you to the power of community engagement while giving you an understanding of the limitations. Community engagement can support marginalized communities in identifying and meeting their needs; it can also, if not done carefully, reinforce existing hierarchies of power.

This course is the foundational course in the new [Minor in Community Engagement](#). The minor will support you to achieve better outcomes for communities

Learning Outcomes:

After successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Articulate theoretical understandings of the complex and contested natures of the terms “community”, “engagement” and “community engagement,” based on your experiences and learning in the course. Recognize the functioning of hierarchical social and power relations in and between diverse communities, public institutions, the non-profit sector, and the private sector.
2. Participate in a community engagement effort while drawing on the course concepts to inform your participation.
3. Assess the effectiveness of a small community engagement process in creating engagement and social change.

How We Work Together

This course explores how we can engage people in making the world a better place. To that end, I ask that we model inclusive and non-oppressive behaviour in our work together in the course. While the course content focusses more on “how” we can engage with others rather than the content of issues of homophobia, colonization, racialization, ableism, and other exclusions, I trust that you will bring your knowledge in these areas acquired in other social science courses to bear on the topics we cover here. If you need support to think through how to engage with others on a particular issue, what words to use, how to intervene in a situation, how to respond to someone else’s questions or comments, how to set a boundary, or if you are hurt by someone else’s comments or behaviours, I invite you to talk to me for coaching, to provide feedback or to request that I

address a situation. Our society does not often model equitable relations; we are all learning together. We can do so with compassion while being direct in our engagement with issues that may arise. It is my hope that we can use this time to learn more about how to create and sustain inclusive and safer environments.

Reading(s)/Textbook(s):

Course readings have been selected to support student learning on the key concepts, principles, practices, and skills to be covered in class. Students are expected to read the weekly required readings prior to class in order to fully participate in class discussions and group work sessions

Textbook (required):

Tinglin, Win, and Donna Joyette. 2020. *Community Engagement in a Changing Social Landscape*. First edition. FriesenPress.

Citation Style

The Chicago author-date citation style (17th edition) is to be used in the assignments and papers of this course. For more information, please see: https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html

Course Activities & Methods of Evaluation

Lectures and In-class Discussions: Weekly lectures will explore key concepts, principles, practices, and skills in community engagement. This includes topics in engagement strategies, communication and media, and working in groups and with community. Lectures will also engage with contemporary critical issues and discourse, reflexivity and ethics, and positioning community engagement practices in social theory, youth activism and social movements.

Community Engagement Project on waste and circular economy: We are fortunate to continue an ongoing partnership with Community Action for Environmental Sustainability (CAFES) for this collaborative advocacy project. Throughout the term, students will work in small groups with one of the participating community associations/organizations from the CAFES network across Ottawa to learn about an issue and to create a series of products and deliverables on the chosen topic to engage Ottawa residents through social media and other methods.

Participation: The in-class and assigned elements of this course are designed to build on each other. Many of the key concepts, principles, practices, and skills covered in the required readings and in-class lectures will inform and support you throughout the development of your Community Engagement Project. Similarly, work sessions with your groups will raise important issues and questions that will contribute to our discussions during the lecture sessions where we can reflect on your experiences, progress, and challenges. Regular attendance and ongoing active participation in both the lecture and group working sessions are therefore crucial to meeting the learning outcomes of this course.

Assignments: In addition to the deliverables for the Community Engagement Project, there will be three reflection assignments. *Detailed Assignment Briefs* will be posted separately on the course Brightspace page. Unless otherwise noted in the detailed assignment brief, all assignments are due before 11:59 pm on the deadline date and must be submitted via the course Brightspace page.

Exam: An in-class exam will evaluate student comprehension and critical thinking based on the course

content including lectures, readings, and other assigned materials.

Evaluation deadlines and weights:

Participation (20%)

15% Attendance

5% Peer evaluation

Reflection Assignments (15%)

September 28: 5% Neighbourhood tour reflection

December 7: 10% Learning through community engagement

Community Engagement Project (40%)

Oct 3: 5% Project Plan (group)

Oct 17: 5% Draft project deliverables (group with individual component)

Nov 14: 25% Final project deliverables (group with individual component)

Nov 27: 5% Project presentations (group)

Exam (25%)

Nov 26: 25% In-class exam

Bonus points

1% Attend community dissemination event

1% Attend CA meeting or other CA event