

Community Meeting Paper - Assignment Guidelines

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Assignment Summary

The Community Meeting Paper requires you to attend an approved community meeting live and write a 2400-3600 word paper reflecting on each of the ten core principles of community psychology. The paper is due at the end of Week 5.

Step 1: Propose a Meeting

Before you can attend a meeting, you must submit a proposal for approval. Ideally, you will propose a meeting in your community of reference. The reason is that community meetings cover topics of local concern, and if you live there these topics will make more sense to you than to an outsider. That said, you are allowed to use a meeting happening anywhere. If it meets the course requirements, I will approve it.

Eligible Meetings - Involve elected or appointed community leaders voting and making decisions at a meeting with an agenda. Examples include:

- Regular City Council meetings, Board of Selectmen meetings, etc.
- Regular School Committee meetings
- Neighborhood Association meetings
- UML Student organization's executive committee business meetings
- Nonprofit board meetings
- Faith-based or advocacy group's executive, council, planning or business meetings

Ineligible Meetings - Cannot be approved because community leaders are not voting and making decisions, or the meeting may otherwise not provide enough community business for you to observe the community psychology principles "in action". Examples include:

- Public hearings, Q&A sessions, social events, forums
- Self-help or therapy group gatherings
- Informational or training sessions, educational meetings
- Staff meetings, unless you are an elected official (in which case, we can make it work)

Sure Thing Meeting - For those with no preference, and for anyone who just likes to have a sure thing, I've got you. Please find the **Sure-Thing Meeting Proposal** which follows. **You can copy-paste the Sure-Thing Meeting Proposal as your own and it will be approved.** I will also list a few *other* Sure-Thing options that are automatic "yes" proposals too.

This is not a trick. Historically, about half of all students will choose a "Sure-Thing" meeting and the other half will choose a meeting in their own community. There's no judgement from me. Do what's best for you. I'm giving you parameters and options.

Sure-Thing Meeting Proposal

1. **Meeting Name:** Regular Lowell City Council Meeting
2. **Date/Time:** February 17, 2026 @ 6:30pm Eastern Time
3. **Website:** <https://www.lowellma.gov/517/City-Council>
4. **Meeting Agenda Link:** TBD*

* I will reply to my proposal with a direct link to the meeting agenda when it is posted in [the Agenda Center](#) (usually on the Friday before the Council meeting).

5. **Agenda Highlights:** TBD*

* I will reply to my proposal with a 2-3 sentence summary of key points from the full agenda prior to the meeting. I am making this proposal before the agenda has been set.

6. **Past Agendas and Meeting Minutes:**

All past meeting agendas and minutes are in the [Agenda Center](#).

7. **Attendance:**

- I will watch via the livestream online at <https://www.ltc.org/> on "Channel 6" live.
- (or)
- I will attend in person and the location is in the Council Chambers in City Hall, 375 Merrimack St. On-street parking is no-cost after 6pm, and the main doors to City Hall are on Arcand Drive.

(Students: DELETE the one that's not applicable to you AND delete this note.)

8. **Proof of Attendance:**

I understand that I need to capture two short selfie videos, one at the start of the meeting and one at the end of the meeting. These two videos will include myself and the meeting environment with a visible clock (either livestream or the in-person meeting room, as appropriate). I will submit both of these at the end of the meeting on the day of the meeting. I am aware that you will not share these videos that I am providing as evidence of my attendance.

(Students: The previous option is one that will work. If you'd like to propose some other way of proving that you have watched/attended your proposed meeting live in its entirety, please do. Most students find that this given option to be the best way for them. Another way is to provide the name and business contact information for a community leader present at your meeting who is willing to verify your live attendance at the full meeting. Propose something and my response will say whether I can accept it. Delete this note.)

9. **Required Statement of Understanding:**

I understand that not providing the proof of attendance as I have proposed results in -2.5 points (-10%) on my grade, because live meeting attendance is essential.

(Students: You DO need to include the prior "I understand..." statement in your proposal, verbatim, for clarity; delete this text)

Other Sure-Thing Meeting Options

- Boston, MA Regular City Council meets every Weds. at 12pm; info is at <https://www.boston.gov/departments/city-council>
- Worcester, MA Regular School Committee meets Thurs. February 5at 5:30pm; info is at <https://www.worcesterschools.org/page/school-committee>

Step 2: Attend the Meeting Live

Before you attend, make sure that you have read about the paper itself, so that you know what to look/listen for when attending.

Be sure to send the proof of attendance – whatever proof you proposed/we agreed to in your proposal. The default is to submit selfie videos at the meeting start and end, which booth must be submitted on the same date as the meeting occurs for it to count as attendance check.

Another bit of repeated advice from excellent former students is to write the ten core principles, and a brief definition of each, to guide notetaking during the meeting. Remember your goal for the main part of the paper is to discuss the presence and/or absence of each of the ten core principles.

To write a great paper, immerse yourself in the live meeting experience. It's why I have you attend live, whether you do so virtually or in person. Follow the agenda to stay engaged and take notes with the ten core principles of community psychology in mind. Focus on observing things that illustrate each principle.

You're not recording every little detail about the meeting like a transcriptionist but, rather, noting things that help *illustrate core principles*. Attend and observe with this in mind, and your notes should flow into the paper nicely.

There is a three-hour rule! If your meeting goes past three hours and you want to leave, you can. This is rare, but one time a student attended a meeting that went seven hours, and it wasn't until I was reading their paper that I learned that detail. Now? Here's a whole paragraph so that it never happens again. Leave after three hours unless you want to stay.

Be sure to submit the proof of attendance **at the end**, sending whatever you proposed for attendance check-in which needs to be submitted same day as the meeting.

Step 3: Write the Paper

Cool. You've attended an approved meeting and now you've got a paper to write that demonstrates your ability to apply the ten core principles in a real community setting. The paper has two sections.

Paper Section #1 – About the Meeting (800-1200 words)

Summarize the meeting with enough detail to set the context for your analysis. Begin with how the meeting started and provide highlights relevant to the ten principles. Avoid excessive detail or transcription-style notes. Focus on the details that support your reflection in Section 2, and share your own human experience of attending.

You want to be clear and concise, and part of that clarity is letting your reader know about your experience of the meeting, a bit about how it felt as you attended. Take the reader into the room with you a little here.

Paper Section #2 – Community Psychology Reflection (1600-2400 words)

Here you earn most of your points. This is your space to discuss both the presence and the absence of each of the ten core principles of community psychology as appropriate. Make sure each principle has its own subheading, and around the same level of discussion. Do not give any space to defining terms or paraphrasing what they mean. I am your target audience, and I already know what these words mean. Show me that you now do also by applying them in the context of your community meeting.

These are the ten core principles:

1. prevention
2. social justice
3. ecological perspective
4. respect for diversity
5. active citizen participation
6. grounding in research and evaluation
7. interdisciplinary collaboration
8. sense of community
9. empowerment, and
10. promotion of wellness

Earning the Best Grade - Read This Section Entirely

You can access a complete, sample paper on [the course website](#) and in *Start Here*.

Check the grading rubric on the next page before writing and definitely re-check the grading rubric before *submitting* your paper. The rubric is here to help you do well. It's not a trick. I want you to earn an A+ on this. And ask any questions that you have while writing. I welcome a million questions if you have them. Don't worry or hesitate to reach out, please.

Remember the Academic Integrity and AI Policies available in the course syllabus. Don't just drop the sample paper and these guidelines into an app and expect it to produce a good paper for you. It really won't. And that mess on Course Hero earned a failing grade too.

Community Psychology is a field defined by its values, and the assignments here are all designed for you to learn about those values and core principles by applying them to your own human observations of the world.

Generative AI tools may not be used to create substantive content for your paper. But very, very truly, I am telling you that you will do better grade-wise, and spend less time on all of it, by completing this on your own. That's the pathway to an A, rather than you going against the AI Policy that's literally here to help you and trying to teach an AI app how to be a member of a human community observing other humans doing human things for human purposes.

Any questions on this paper, or on course policies, at all? Ask on the discussion boards, message me, or come to office hours. I want to help you do your best and I will make time for you. **Let me know how I can help.**

Community Meeting Paper Grading Rubric

Requirement	Grading Criteria	Points
Attendance	Attended an approved meeting live, from start to finish (or 3 hours).	5
	Watched a recording of an approved meeting later but did not attend live or failed to provide proof of attendance at the end of the meeting.	2.5
	Did not attend or later watch a recording of an approved meeting.	0
Section 1: About the Meeting	Clearly summarizes the writer's experience of the meeting as they experienced in the room or livestream. Writing is clear and mostly free of errors, providing the reader with a personalized description of the writer's attendance at this meeting with adequate specific details of what took place relevant to Section 2. Length: 800-1200 words.	4
	Summarizes the writer's experience of the meeting somewhat but is more of a paraphrase of the meeting's agenda; lacks personalized observations or relevant details of this writer's attendance at this meeting, and/or is outside the word count guidelines.	2
	Fails to summarize attendance at the meeting or provide relevant personal observations and details from one's attendance, and/or includes only generic details.	0
Section 2: Community Psychology Reflection	Thoroughly analyzes the presence and/or absence of each of the ten core principles with specific, clearly described examples and personal observations from the meeting. Each principle is discussed under its own subheading. Demonstrates personalized application of concepts with no space taken up by definitions or paraphrased course content. The reader can discern from this reflection that the writer understands the ten core principles and can apply them to their own observations of a live community meeting. Length: 1600-2400 words.	16
	Addresses all ten principles but lacks some depth, clarity or specificity in their application. May include unnecessary content (e.g., definitions or paraphrases of course materials) or be outside the word count guidelines.	14
	Correctly analyzes 7-8 principles but omits or does not fully apply 2-3. Writing may lack the personalized application necessary to convey a thorough understanding of concepts.	11
	Lacks the personalized application of concepts necessary to convey understanding, and/or misapplies 4+ principles. Reflection does not demonstrate adequate understanding. The reader cannot discern that the writer understands several core principles.	8