Community Informatics (CI) addresses concepts being used in the emerging scholarship on computing phenomena regarding how people and groups can move from merely having some kind of digital connection to deeper relationships, involving things like identity and shared behavior. It concerns how local, historical communities are using information and communications technologies. The course covers key principles for work in the non-profit/public sector as people harness new technologies and media as individuals, students, families, community organizations, and so on. Overarching ideas prepare both professionals and researchers to understand and master this environment, whatever their technology background. It should be especially useful for those interested in activism, public or community libraries, youth services, social work, education, and anyone interested in working with or studying underserved communities.

As the balance of power among groups is often unequal and resources are used differently, the course examines how much reciprocity characterizes CI relationships. It presumes a critical need to understand not only how communities access, create, organize, and share information, but also the types and qualities of connections between and among their members and networks. Community members spearhead both naming the issues of the community and the process leading to solutions. CI tends to prioritize collaborations with marginalized communities to create solutions to the most serious crises threatening society as a whole: poverty, health, violence, food security, etc.