

**Participatory Modes of Inquiry
CSUS 838
Fall 2016
Thursday 1:50-4:40pm 208 Olds Hall**

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I. Introduction

This course provides an in-depth, graduate-level exploration into the nature of community engagement. It is designed for students who plan to take a collaborative or participatory approach to their thesis, dissertation or capstone project. The course surveys the major streams of literature that lay the foundation for *how* we might engage with others outside the academy to do our work. It therefore draws heavily on the theoretical and practical literature in the areas of participatory and action research. Throughout the course students are expected to identify the streams of the literature that resonate with their own philosophy of research and are compatible with the body of work in which they intend to locate their own research. Students examine how the various approaches to participatory inquiry coincide or conflict with their current epistemological and methodological views. Students are asked to consider how they might incorporate participatory approaches into their personal, professional and academic lives. The format of the course is varied and includes mini-lectures, discussion, group work, and individual and collective reflection.

Prerequisites

Graduate students. Students should have completed 1) at least one graduate level research methods course and 2) CSUS 800, 802, or a graduate philosophy of science course. Preference is given to CSUS graduate students.

Course objectives

Upon completion of the course students should be able to:

- Define community engagement and its relationship to inquiry and research.
- Identify the key characteristics of an action or participatory approach to inquiry and how these approaches are relevant to the concept of community engagement
- Identify how action/participatory inquiry differs from 'conventional' or 'traditional' approaches to research.
- Differentiate the various branches of participatory and action research, their roots, their essential philosophies, and areas of emphases.
- Identify research stream(s) that fall closest to their personal philosophy of inquiry and consider whether (and how) they may be incorporated into their own personal, professional or research work.
- Demonstrate the ability for reflection and dialogue; specifically: demonstrate ability to surface assumptions, use the reflective loop, engage in active listening (suspending, summarizing, paraphrasing and reframing).

II. Course Format

The class will meet weekly in 208 Olds Hall on Thursdays 1:50-4:40 p.m. The course is structured as a seminar, with emphasis on large and small group interaction.

Our purpose in this class is to *learn together*. I am therefore keen to create an environment in which we support each other's learning through dialogue. During class students should feel free to raise questions, share pertinent experiences, bring interesting articles to class, or make suggestions about how we do things. In addition, since this course is taught in an interdisciplinary fashion it is expected that there will be diversity in disciplinary backgrounds and epistemological beliefs within the class. As such, it is important that we cultivate a tolerant, open-minded ethos within the class.

The course reader is posted on D2L, with the readings organized by week. Each week students are expected to do the assigned readings before class and respond in one of two ways: with a mini-paper or a posted reading response. On two occasions a skills assignment will be due instead. The course schedule is detailed in Section IV, including due dates for all the assignments.

Finally, midway through the course we will evaluate how it is going and try to make whatever changes we can to meet our course objectives and/ improve the experience for all of us.

III. Course requirements

32%	Four mini papers synthesizing weekly course readings (each worth 8%)
12%	Skills Assignment 1: Surfacing assumptions with the reflective loop
12%	Skills Assignment 2: Dialogue
10%	Class preparation and participation
	Reading responses posted on time
	Preparation for skills day
	Entry statement
	Contributions to class sessions
34%	Final essay and reflection

We plan to spend the majority of our class time working with concepts presented in the assigned readings. Our time together represents a formal space for us to think collectively about what these concepts mean and how we may try them out in our scholarly and practical work. Since the readings provide a point of departure for these discussions, it is essential that we all come to class prepared. This means doing the reading and spending some time before class thinking about how these new ideas make sense (or don't make sense) to your own practice. As such, **your preparation--your commitment-- to the class, will make this class. It is everything....**and I ask that you are fully present for your colleagues when you arrive. I promise the same to you.

3.1. Mini Papers (4 Papers, 32%; each 8%)

The goal of this assignment is to help develop the skills necessary to read and critically analyze the scholarly literature on participatory inquiry. A mini-paper is a 2-3 page paper that is written about the week's readings. The tasks of the mini paper assignment are to: 1) determine the main ideas presented in these papers and 2) to synthesize these ideas into a concise 2-3 page statement about the topic. The paper need not be organized around a "thesis statement" or "hypothesis" but it must be clearly written and organized. The length is purposely limited to encourage students to focus on identifying the most important ideas, rather than mechanically summarizing everything mentioned in the article.

All students will submit four mini-papers. The first mini-paper is required of all students in Week 3. Feedback will be given on the mini-papers in Week 4. After this date (eg, starting week 5—Sept 29) students may choose the weeks in which they prefer to write a mini paper. To help you keep pace with your work, I require that **at least one** additional mini paper be submitted by Week 8. You choose the weeks that you want to write and of course you can write more than two before Week 8. After Week 8, you will have 5 more opportunities to write the remaining two mini-papers. In the weeks you do not write a mini paper, you will write a reading response (see below).

Mini-papers must be submitted in hard copy at the beginning of class. Late mini-papers will not be accepted. Guidelines for mini-papers and how they are evaluated are detailed in the Mini Paper handout and can be found on the course D2L site.

3.2. Skills Assignment Write-Ups (2 assignments, 24 %; 12% each)

Aside from understanding the intellectual material, we hope to develop skills that are important to the practice of participatory modes of inquiry. Two skills days are planned in which students will practice reflection and active listening/dialogue. Following the in-class practice of each skill students are expected to continue working on these skills with a follow-up assignment. A write-up will be required of each.

3.3. Class Preparation and Participation (10%)

Active participation is necessary to make this class a meaningful learning experience. We will learn more from each other if we stay engaged with the material, reflect on its meaning for our personal practice, and support others as they contribute to our collective understanding of this work. On a weekly basis students are expected to attend class, read the readings, reflect on the content and meaning of these texts, participate in class dialogues, and complete the weekly assignments that are designed to promote engagement with the chosen topic (specifically, a mini-paper, reading response, and/or skills assignment).

Starting in Week 5 we will begin a regular routine in which students write either a mini-paper or reading response each week. If a student opts for a reading response, the response should be posted by 7am, Thursday morning. This allows others in the class time to have a look before class. Over the course of the semester, students are expected to post 6 reading responses.

- **Reading Responses**

What exactly is a response?

Unlike the mini-paper, a reading response may be written in an informal style. The point of the response is to record your reactions to the readings. What were the readings about? What points are most interesting or confusing to you? In particular we ask that you identify questions or concepts that you wish to delve into more deeply during class (and why you chose them). Our hope is that the reading responses will enliven class time discussions and encourage students to think individually, and then collectively, about the readings and to integrate the material over time.

- **Skills Activity Preparation**

On two occasions we will use class time to practice skills that we believe are important to the practice of participatory inquiry. Some of these activities will require preparation before class. The completion of this work will fall under your class participation grade.

In general, expect to attend class prepared, participate in discussions in class or over the class website, work earnestly on in-class activities, keep an open-mind, and provide collegial support to fellow students. Do this and you will receive full credit for class participation.

3.4. Final Essay and Reflection (34%)

A final essay and reflective statement is required at the end of this course. The purpose of this assignment is 1) to allow students to integrate their thinking with respect to the concepts presented on participatory and action research methodologies and 2) to consider how they may (or may not) fit in with their current views and / or plans for research. Guidelines for this reflection will be posted to the course website by week 13. As suggested by the weight assigned to this work, the final essay/reflection represents the culmination of a student's learning in the class. Be prepared to work on this assignment as you would any final exam or paper.

IV. Course Policies

- 4.1. **Class attendance** – Students are expected to attend class and to be on time. Absences will be noted. If you are sick, please stay home and get well. However, please notify me beforehand. If you miss class it is your responsibility to obtain notes from fellow students and check D2L for upcoming assignments.
- 4.2. **Class conduct** – Collegiality is important in this course. Each of us should feel free to raise questions, share experiences during class, bring interesting articles or issues to class, or make suggestions about how we do things. The course is taught in an interdisciplinary fashion and it is expected that there will be diversity in disciplinary backgrounds and epistemological beliefs. As such, it is important that we cultivate a culture of open-mindedness in the class.
- 4.3. **Readings** – All assigned readings should be completed before coming to class. Be ready to discuss them in depth. The readings are chosen carefully to give you background information about the different data collection and analysis techniques and are helpful resources when carrying out your final essay.
- 4.4. **Grading** - Throughout the course I will grade your work. To help those who are conscious of grades, I will also try to give students an indication of “where you stand in the class” from time to time. Although we try to focus on what we are learning rather than grades, I am sympathetic to students’ desire to have feedback about how they are faring in the class. If you feel unsure about this you should always feel free to come talk to me and ask me; it’s completely fair—so don’t be embarrassed if you are concerned.
- 4.6. **Accommodations** – If you need accommodations in this class related to a disability or religious holidays, please make an appointment with me to discuss as soon as possible.
- 4.7. **Academic Integrity** – Article 2.III.B.2 of the SRR states: “The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards.” In addition, (insert name of unit offering course) adheres to the policies on academic honesty specified in General Student Regulation 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations.

Therefore, unless specified otherwise, you are expected to complete all written course assignments on your own. This means you are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the www.allmsu.com Web site to complete any course work in this course. Students who violate MSU regulations on Protection of Scholarship and Grades will receive a failing grade in the course or on the assignment.

Faculty are required to report all instances in which a penalty grade is given for academic dishonesty. Students reported for academic dishonesty are required to take an online course about the integrity of scholarship and grades. A hold will be placed on the student's account until such time as the student completes the course.

V. Course Topics and Schedule

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENT

Week	Date	Topic	Due on this date
1	Sept 1	Overview: Community Engagement, Action Research, Participatory Research	
2	Sept 8	Worldview and Inquiry	Entry paper, please post on Sept 7
3	Sept 12	Reflection	Mini Paper #1 Required
4	Sept 22	Literature Streams: Lewin & The Action Research Cycle	Skills Assignment #1: Reflexivity No mini paper
5	Sept 29	"Southern PR": Fals Borda/Freire/Horton	Mini Paper or Response
6	October 6	Cooperative Inquiry/Human Inquiry	Mini Paper or Response
7	October 13	Community-Based Participatory Research	Mini Paper or Response
8	October 20	Participatory modelling	Mini Paper or Response*
9	October 27	Citizen Science, Participatory Rural Appraisal, Collaborative Conservation	Mini Paper or Response
10	November 3	Dialogue: Practice	No Mini Paper Skills Assignment #2 due

			Friday
11	November 10	Power and Knowledge	Mini Paper or Response
12	November 17	Presentation Knowledge/ Representation	Mini Paper or Response
Thanksgiving	Nov 24		
13	December 1	Validity	Mini Paper or Response
14	December 9	Mainstreaming and Co-optation	Mini Paper or Response
15	Dec 16	Synthesis	Final Essay and Reflection

***Two mini-papers must be completed by October 20 (Week 8).**