USP 430: 
Participatory Research Methods for Community Development

Winter 2016
Tu Th 2-3:50 pm | UTS 210

People generally describe sustainability as an ideal that encompasses three spheres: environmental, economic, and social. Often, however, the social component receives the least amount of attention. Many projects lauded for their sustainability benefit only a privileged few. Alternately, the framework of just sustainability places issues of equity and social justice at the center of the discussion. It requires that we ask, first and foremost, who wins, who loses, and who decides. As community development (CD) scholars and practitioners, we are in a position to integrate these questions—and a vision of just sustainability—into our work. Central to this task is working in partnership with community members to identify problems, to ask questions, and to develop solutions.

This course introduces students to participatory methods, placing special emphasis on research ethics, the positionality of the researcher, and embedding research within CD practice. We will focus on research design within the context of a community project, data collection, data analysis, and the dissemination of results. We will cover various approaches to measuring urban phenomena, including basic interview techniques, focus groups, observation, surveys, participatory mapping, and other qualitative analytical methods. Over the course of USP 430, students will:

- Gain an understanding of the philosophy of participatory action research and its use in CD practice.
- Learn practical methods of data collection and analysis that are appropriate for community-based organizations and for community development work.
- Consider the challenges of evaluating CD practice and learn approaches for measuring progress.

Over the course of the term, we will be partnering with organizations working towards a vision of just sustainability in east Multnomah County. Our partners include the Multnomah Co. Health Department, the Urban League, and Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. Working in small groups, you will help them address some pressing research questions related to the improvement of access to healthy food.
Office hours and contact info:

Office hours are after class (TuTh 4-4:45pm) or by appointment. Please email in advance (n.mcclintock@pdx.edu) to sign up for a date/time. My office is 350E Urban Center.

Teaching Assistant: Amanda Hudson (hudsonam@pdx.edu)

**When emailing either of us, please write “USP 430” at the start of the subject line.**

Co-creating a high quality learning environment:

Creating a high-quality learning environment takes effort on everyone’s part. I will: provide a provocative and safe environment for exploring ideas; offer a variety of different kinds of learning experiences; respect the knowledge and experiences that you bring with you into the classroom, as all of us are both learners and teachers; provide clear information about what is expected; and encourage improvement. For your part, please …

- **Exhibit “electronic courtesy”** so that you and others can be focused and fully present. Turn off/silence cell-phones. *Do not text or check email on your phone.* You may use a computer to take notes in class if necessary, but only the relevant program should be open for note-taking. Checking Facebook, Twitter, email, or any other distraction *is not OK.* To resist temptation, I suggest *turning off your wi-fi* as soon as you arrive. Failing to exhibit electronic courtesy is disrespectful to all and may result in your being asked to leave class for the day.

- **Be on time** so we can start right at 2PM. Wandering in late is distracting and disrespectful to all. I will take attendance right at the beginning of class, so if you are late, you will be counted absent.

- **Come prepared.** Complete the assigned reading prior to class, be able to summarize the main points, and note anything that confuses you. Also note things that you find particularly provocative.

- **Be fully present in class.** Yes, this means showing up for class, but it also means focusing on the discussions, lectures, and other activities taking place during class time. Your attention and participation is the glue that holds the class together. Participate in class discussions by both contributing your ideas and listening to what others say.

- **Take notes on material covered in class.** Material from lectures, class discussions, and group exercises are an integral part of this learning experience, and may not be covered in your readings. Please note that my PowerPoint slides serve merely as placeholders and/or subject headings for lectures and discussion… *simply writing down what’s written on the slide is not enough!* So, come prepared to take notes and get notes from others if you miss class.

- **Show respect for your fellow students.** Through discussion, our ideas may be questioned and challenged, but always do so in a respectful manner with the goal of mutual learning. Listen respectfully to each other and try to understand ideas from various perspectives. If you disagree with what someone says, you are welcome to present your perspective or offer facts that support a different point of view, but we will always extend courtesy and consideration to each other.

- **Take pride in your work.** Make sure that the work is your own (see Academic Conduct and Integrity below), and make sure that it is represents you well. Please re-read and revise your assignments before turning them in. Check first for a logical flow of ideas and clarity of expression and make any needed edits. Then read it a second time to proofread. Spelling, grammatical, and other mechanical errors will have a negative impact on your grade.
**Academic integrity and conduct:**

You are upper-level students and adults so I don’t need to elaborate on this. I take this seriously, as I expect you to. PSU defines the following as conduct subject to disciplinary action (PSU Student Conduct Code # 577-031-0136):

1. Obstruction or disruption of teaching, research, administration, disciplinary procedures or other University activities, including the University's public service functions or other authorized activities on University-owned or -controlled property, or any other location where teaching, research, administration, disciplinary procedures or other University activities take place.
2. All forms of academic dishonesty, cheating, and fraud, including but not limited to: (a) plagiarism, (b) the buying and selling of course assignments and research papers, (c) performing academic assignments (including tests and examinations) for other persons, (d) unauthorized disclosure and receipt of academic information and (e) falsification of research data.

**Academic accommodations:**

If you are a student with a documented disability and are registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC), please contact me immediately to facilitate arranging academic accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through the DRC should contact the DRC immediately at 503-725-4150.

**Other resources you should know about:**

For information on food, housing, financial, utility, and childcare assistance, please visit: [http://www.pdx.edu/studentaffairs/CISFS](http://www.pdx.edu/studentaffairs/CISFS)

The Office of Diversity & Multicultural Student Services (Smith Memorial Union 425) provides structured, academic support service, advising, referrals, and advocacy for first-generation college students, low-income and others facing special challenges. [http://www.pdx.edu/dmss/](http://www.pdx.edu/dmss/)

The Learning Center (Millar Library 245) mission is to foster the learning process by empowering PSU students to accomplish their academic and personal goals. In addition to helping with current coursework, academic support services can assist in developing effective learning strategies. [http://www.pdx.edu/tutoring/](http://www.pdx.edu/tutoring/)

The Writing Center (Cramer 188) will help you with all varieties of projects, including class assignments, resumes, application essays, presentations, and creative writing. It aims to help writers at any stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to the final draft. You can schedule an appointment online and their website also suggests ideas and strategies for completing writing projects. [http://www.writingcenter.pdx.edu/](http://www.writingcenter.pdx.edu/)

PSU's [Student Code of Conduct](http://www.pdx.edu/) makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are strictly prohibited and offenses are subject to the full realm of sanctions, up to and including suspension and expulsion. *If you have not done so already, please complete the required Safe Campus Module* in D2L. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources on PSU’s Enrollment Management & Student Affairs: Sexual Prevention & Response website at [http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault](http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault).
Course Requirements:

Attendance:

Come to class and please arrive to class on time. I will take attendance first thing, so if you’re late, you’ll be counted absent. If you miss class due to excused illness or a documented emergency, check the syllabus and consult with your classmates upon your return to determine what you missed – please do not ask me, “What did I miss?” Unexcused absences will seriously impact your grade. After the first unexcused absence, I will deduct 5 pts from your final grade for each additional unexcused absence, e.g., if you have a 90, but miss four days without a doctor’s note or other documentation, you’ll get a 75.

Reading:

There is required reading on most days. Consider having completed the assigned readings as your entry ticket to class and come prepared to discuss. Hands-on activities in class will require that you’ve read and understood the material. All readings are available through D2L. Click on Readings, then click on that meeting’s folder (eg, Week 1a, Week 3b, etc), but be sure to also consult the syllabus to make sure you’re reading the right thing.

Grading:

Individual Assignments (50%)

In addition to your daily readings, you will complete a reflection on positionality for Week 2b. Instructions/template can be found on D2L in the Individual Assignments folder. Bring a hard copy to class to discuss with your group and to turn in at the end of class. Because this assignment will be used during group discussion, assignments turned in late will receive only half credit. You will also need to complete three short quizzes on D2L. Quizzes are open-note and will cover material from the readings and lectures. See p. 9 for specific Quiz dates.

• Reflection on positionality (25%)
• Quiz 1 (25%)
• Quiz 2 (25%)
• Quiz 3 (25%)

Group Assignments (40%)

Instructions/templates for individual assignments will be posted in D2L/Assignments and all Group Assignments should be uploaded to the appropriate Dropbox on D2L. This portion of your grade includes the following components:

• Draft Popular Education Handout (5%)
• Final Popular Education Handout (25%)
• Draft Transcription (5%)
• Final Transcription + Analysis (25%)
• Presentation of Final Projects (10%)
You will also fill out an evaluation of everyone’s individual contribution to your group. The average score of these peer evaluations will be factored into your individualized Group Assignments grade.

- **Group Participation (30%)**

**Preparation and Participation (10%)**

You’re expected to participate in large- and small-group discussions in class throughout the term. Your group members will evaluate your preparation and during small group discussions and in-class activities and I will assess your contributions to in-class discussions.

---

**Course Outline / Readings**

**1a. Introduction to the Course / Participatory Action Research**

*Have you had any experience with research in community development, e.g., in a capstone, another class, internship, etc. What challenges did you face? What challenges did the organization face? What did you accomplish and what do you wish you had known?*

**1b. The Research Context**

*What will we be researching this term? We will meet representatives from our community partners working in East Multnomah County, and discuss the research questions they would like us to help them answer.*

**Guest Speakers:** Shantae Johnson *(Multnomah Co. Health Dept.)* and representatives from Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon and the Urban League of Portland.


**2a. Community Participation**

*What is participatory action research? How does it fit with community organizing and activism? What can geese tell us about how to proceed with participatory research for CD?*

- Chatterton, Fuller, and Routledge (2007) Relating action to activism: Theoretical and methodological reflections, *PARAM*
- Stoecker, Ch. 2: The Goose Approach to Research
2b. Positionality, Power, and Ethics

Why must we recognize power, privilege, and systems of oppression to do CD research and practice? How does your identity and background matter, and what can you do to gain trust and build relationships for research? What are our obligations as researchers? What does the university require of us, and what does good CD practice require? Are there any conflicts between these?

- Crosley-Corcoran (2013) Explaining white privilege to a broke white person
- Adair & Howell (1997) Creating and atmosphere where everyone participates

3a. The Project-Based Approach

What are the elements of a traditional research project? How does research fit into a project-based approach? What are the appropriate methods for CD research and how do we fit these into the context of a community-based project?

- Stoecker, Ch. 3: Hand and Head Together
- Cooperative Development Institute (2015) How cooperative grocery stores are bringing food access to low-income neighborhoods

3b. Interviews

Part of pre-research may include getting the lay of the land through structured conversations and interviews with key stakeholders and community members. We also use interviews to collect data for analysis. What makes for a good interview? What kinds of questions should we ask to elicit good data? How do issues of power factor into the interview process?

- Patton (1990) Qualitative Interviewing, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*

4a. Focus Groups

Like interviewing, focus groups are important ways to collect qualitative data. What do we need to think about when conducting focus groups?

- Silverman & Patterson, Ch.5: Focus Groups
- Bosco & Herman (2010) Focus Groups as Collaborative Research Performances, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Geography* **read section called “Working with Focus Groups”, bottom of p. 197 thru first column on p. 204**
- Conradson (2005) Transcribing and analyzing focus group material, *Methods in Human Geography*, 140-143

4b. WORKSHOP
5a. Coding

Once we have conducted our interviews and transcribed them or compiled our field notes, how do we analyze the data? Coding is the process of poring over qualitative data to identify major organizing themes and commonalities.

- Cope (2010) Coding Qualitative Data, QRMHG
- Silverman & Patterson, 29-40
- Cahill (2007) Participatory data analysis, PARAM

5b. WORKSHOP

6a. Observation

Often we learn the most by actively taking part in an organization’s day-to-day activities. This can be a form of research! How do we collect data when acting as a “participant observer” and what are the ethical implications? How does this differ from observation? We’ll do a practice run on campus, discuss, then prepare for collecting data in the field.

- Kearns (2010) Seeing with Clarity: Undertaking Observational Research, QRMHG
- Silverman & Patterson, Ch. 3: Field Notes and Observations

6b. Surveys I

What do we need to think about when we create a survey to collect data? What issues might be particularly relevant for CD work? How do we decide whom to survey?

- Theodore (2014) Working in the shadow zones of urban economies: Using questionnaires to research hidden populations, Researching the City
- Parfitt (2005) Questionnaire design and sampling, Methods in Human Geography

7a. Surveys II


7b. WORKSHOP

8a. Presenting Data

Research itself is often part and parcel of community organizing. How can we disseminate research through the community as well as to influential external stakeholders or policy-makers? What are ways of communicating research results to a non-technical audience? How can we present our data to inform and inspire change?

- DeLyser & Pawson (2010) From Personal to Public: Communicating Qualitative Research for Public Consumption, QRMHG
8b. WORKSHOP

9a. Participatory Mapping

*How can participatory mapping and GIS contribute to CD? What do we need to keep in mind when engaging in participatory mapping projects?*

*Guest presentation: Dillon Mahmoudi, School of Urban Studies & Planning, PSU*

- Elwood et al. (2007) *Participatory GIS: The Humboldt/West Humboldt Park Community GIS Project, Chicago, USA, PARAM*

9b. Performance, Photovoice, and Other Techniques

*How can we integrate the actual voices and visual perspectives of our community partners into research?*

*Guest presentation: Elliot Leffler, Theatre Department, Reed College*

- Krieg & Roberts (2007) *Photovoice: Insights into marginalization through a ‘community lens’ in Saskatchewan, Canada, PARAM*
- PSU Research and Training Center for Pathways to Positive Futures, “I Bloomed Here”: A Guide for Conducting Photovoice with Youth Receiving Culturally- and Community-based Services

10a. WORKSHOP: Presentation Practice Run

*What are you actually communicating? This is your chance to get feedback from your peers before presenting to our community partners.*

10b. Final Presentations / Course Wrap Up

*What have we learned this term? What were we able to do with these new tools? This is our chance to share our results with our community partners and to reflect on the process.*
## Class Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>a Tu 1/5</td>
<td>Intro to the Course</td>
<td>Read the syllabus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b Th 1/7</td>
<td>The Research Context</td>
<td>Stoecker, Ch. 1; Streckert; Cuneo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>a Tu 1/12</td>
<td>Community Participation</td>
<td>Kindon et al.; Chatterton et al.; Stoecker, Ch. 2; begin reading materials on black-owned coops</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b Th 1/14</td>
<td>Positionality, Power &amp; Ethics</td>
<td>Dowling; Crosley-Corcoran; Minkler; Adair &amp; Howell</td>
<td>Positionality (bring to class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>a Tu 1/19</td>
<td>The Project-Based Approach</td>
<td>S&amp;P, 1-15, 23-26; Stoecker, Ch. 3; Cooperative Development Institute</td>
<td>Quiz 1 (D2L by 2pm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b Th 1/21</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>McDowell; Patton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>a Tu 1/26</td>
<td>Focus Groups</td>
<td>S&amp;P, Ch. 5; Bosco &amp; Herman; Conradson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b Th 1/28</td>
<td>WORKSHOP</td>
<td></td>
<td>Group: Draft handout due (upload to D2L + bring copy to class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>a Tu 2/2</td>
<td>Coding</td>
<td>Cope; S&amp;P, 29-40; Cahill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b Th 2/4</td>
<td>WORKSHOP</td>
<td></td>
<td>Final handout due (D2L by 2pm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>a Tu 2/9</td>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Kearns; S&amp;P, Ch. 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b Th 2/11</td>
<td>Surveys I</td>
<td>Theodore; Parfitt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>a Tu 2/16</td>
<td>Surveys II</td>
<td>Bryman</td>
<td>Quiz 2 (D2L by 2pm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b Th 2/18</td>
<td>WORKSHOP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>a Tu 2/23</td>
<td>Presenting Data</td>
<td>Delyser &amp; Pawson; UN Commission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b Th 2/25</td>
<td>WORKSHOP</td>
<td></td>
<td>Group: Draft transcription (D2L + bring copy to class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>a Tu 3/1</td>
<td>Participatory Mapping</td>
<td>IFAD; Elwood et al.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b Th 3/3</td>
<td>Photovoice + Performance/Theater</td>
<td>Conrad; Krieg &amp; Roberts; PSU RTC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>a Tu 3/8</td>
<td>WORKSHOP: Practice presentations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b Th 3/10</td>
<td>Final Project Presentations</td>
<td></td>
<td>Group: Final Report &amp; Presentation (PDF to D2L by 2pm + hard copy to partner in class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Week</td>
<td>M 3/14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Quiz 3 (D2L by noon)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>