EDU 292 (4 units)  
Introduction to Participatory Action Research  
Spring 2011

Instructor: Heidi Ballard, hballard@ucdavis.edu, office phone: 530-754-6255, office located in SOEB room 251  
Time: Wednesdays 2:10-5pm, Office hours TBA  
Location: 2368/72 Academic Surge Bldg.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) and related methodologies have received growing attention in fields of education, agriculture, environment justice, sustainable development and public health over the past several decades. Defined as "systematic investigation, with the collaboration of those affected by the issue being studied, for the purposes of education and taking action or effecting social change," PAR is not a research method but an approach to research partnerships and applications, and has roots in popular education in developing nations of Asia and Africa. The involvement of community members in research and scholarship has emerged in a variety of fields independently. Although each field may represent different traditions and methods for collaboration, there are questions and issues that are common across fields.

Course Purpose and Structure

This interdisciplinary graduate student seminar focuses on the ways in which researchers and community members collaborate to conduct research on issues that affect them. Such efforts often call for clarifications and/or redefinitions of: scientists’ roles and methods, the knowledge development roles of participating community members, and the varying meanings of “community.” The goal of this seminar is to provide doctoral and masters degree students with an understanding of theories, principles and strategies of PAR, an appreciation of advantages and limitations of this approach and skills necessary for participating effectively in PAR projects. This course provides the opportunity for graduate students from different schools and departments to come together to share perspectives, develop new skills and explore how they can apply this learning to community-based participatory research projects.

The class will meet once a week for three hours. Although some lectures will be presented, the course’s primary format will reflect participatory research’s philosophical commitment to co-teaching and co-learning, and critical group discussion will be emphasized. Case studies of PAR projects, often presented by guest speakers involved in participatory research, will be presented to complement and illustrate academic discussions of principles, issues and challenges raised.

Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to:
Identify the theoretical perspectives that have shaped the development and evolution of PAR and related methodologies and describe the contributions of each.
List and describe the major principles of PAR and related methodologies and illustrate their
relevance with case study data.
Identify and analyze race, gender and class dimensions of participatory research.
Identify and discuss the means of addressing validity and rigor issues in PAR and related methodologies.
Describe the spectrum of what gets labeled participatory research and the implications of this.
Identify advantages and limitations of PAR and related methodologies as a method for approaching study and action to address problems.

The themes explored in this course reflect contrasting and sometimes conflicting ways of thinking about scholarship, collaboration and research methodology. The focus of the seminar is around dialogue across and between disciplines about how these themes can be translated into the creation of community responsive research. Central themes include the following:

What are the approaches to community-based participatory research? How does community-based participatory research differ from other approaches in defining problems, gathering information and using results?

How do scholars and community members collaborate in the process of knowledge development? What are the research methods (quantitative and qualitative) and steps in the process? What issues or problems arise from this type of work?

How can community-based participatory research be an empowering process for scholars and communities? What difference does it make and for whom?

In what contexts and situations is a participatory approach to research appropriate, and in what cases is it not? What are the implications for academic researchers and for community organizations?

**Required Texts:**

**Required Readings:** In addition to the required text, required readings for each week can be found on the course website (www.smartsite.ucdavis.edu). In addition, Recommended Readings are also provided to allow students to explore each topic further.

**Recommended Texts:**

**Assignments and Grading**
Class Participation (20%) - In keeping with the philosophical orientation of the course, a heavy
emphasis will be placed on high quality class participation, with all students regularly engaged in
discussing readings, providing feedback on peer work, and in other ways contributing to group
learning experience.

**Written Field-Based Assignments (30%)** – Since it is virtually impossible for you to conduct a
participatory research project in 10 weeks, the course is designed to give you some field
experiences that allow you to wrestle with some of the issues in PAR and apply the readings to
your own concrete experiences. Based on feedback from previous offerings of this course, you’ll
have a choice of two different types:

a) **Interviews/Conversations with a potential community partner** - The goal of these shorter,
more frequent assignments is to help facilitate your conversations with your community-based
research partners and give you some experience with participatory approaches. Both
interviews/conversations should be with the same person if possible, so that you can begin to
have more in-depth conversations. If this is not possible, propose an alternative approach to
the instructor at least one week in advance. The write-up contains typed 1) field notes from
interview/focus group discussion (whatever length required), and 2) summary/reflection with
reference to at least one reading (2-3 pages). Assignments are posted on SmartSite but may be
modified with feedback from the class.

    OR

b) **Qualitative Data Analysis of Field Reports from PAR Researchers** – For students who do
not have a potential community partner with whom they can conduct interviews this quarter,
I’ve developed an alternative assignment. You’ll be provided with a draft set of themes with
which to code several anonymous reports from PAR researchers. The course will include a
brief training on this topic. Your write-up will include 1) the coded reports (varying lengths)
and 2) an analysis of your “findings” with respect to the themes and the readings in the class to
date (may also include a critique of the coding themes) (2-3 pages).

1) Field Assignment #1: Initial Conversation (Community and Researcher Asset
Inventory) (15%) – **Due Week 3, Jan. 19, 2011** – in class and on SmartSite
2) Field Assignment #2: Issues Identification Conversation (15%) – **Due Week 7 – Feb 16, 2011** on SmartSite.

**Mid-term Case Study Analysis** (20%) - **Due Week 5 – Feb. 2, 2011** in class and on SmartSite
Students each will read and critically review a community-based participatory research case study.
A three-five page paper in which you will describe, analyze and apply participatory action research
principles to a case of your choosing approved in advance by the instructor (cases can be
provided). Details are posted on SmartSite.

**Final Paper (30%)** – **Due Finals Week – Wednesday, March 16, 2011 (or before)** on SmartSite
A required final paper will ask you to create a proposal that applies a community-based
participatory research approach to a community issue of concern, incorporating the previous
written assignments as you wish. This may be a proposal for your own research that you intend to
conduct, or a hypothetical proposal based on your own or another case. In this proposal you will
discuss: how you are defining a unit (organization, community, etc.) to work with and how this articulates with the issue; how you define the roles for the researcher and community members and how they can work together; how you would structure this research in order to work in a collaborative way; and how you would design this project to maximize participation (or why not) at each stage of the research process. This assignment is intended to be as useful to the student as possible in their stage of research, so the format of the paper can take whatever form is most appropriate (qualifying paper, grant proposal, prospectus, etc.). 8-10 pages.

(Readings and assignments may be modified to better suit the needs of the class.)

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<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>January 5</th>
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<td>- Introductions, Goals for class, Assignments</td>
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<td>- Beginning to Define PAR</td>
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<td>- Case study: Salal Harvesters on Olympic Peninsula, WA</td>
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**Recommended Readings:**


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<th>Week 2</th>
<th>January 12</th>
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<td>- Foundations and Principles of CBPR</td>
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<td>- PAR in Context: Historical and Theoretical Frameworks and Underlying Values and Assumptions</td>
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**Recommended Readings:**


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<th>Week 3</th>
<th>January 19</th>
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<td>- Who is “the Community?”</td>
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<td>- Challenges in building collaborative relationships across differences (Field Assignment #1 Due)</td>
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**Recommended Readings:**

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<th>Week 4</th>
<th>January 26</th>
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<td>- Developing partnerships, issue selection and asset identification</td>
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<td>- GUEST SPEAKERS from San Joaquin Valley CHIP Mapping Project</td>
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**Recommended Readings:**

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<th>Week 5</th>
<th>February 2</th>
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<td>- Quantitative data-gathering and analysis: Defining the problem</td>
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<td>- Youth Participatory Action Research (pending student interest) (Mid-term Case Study Analysis Due)</td>
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**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 6 February 9**

**Qualitative data-gathering and analysis: Defining the problem and application of results**

**GUEST SPEAKERS – Where are they now?: Panel of Former PAR students**


**Recommended Readings:**


| Week 7  | February 16 | Using quantitative and qualitative data together for problem definition and action  
| Field Assignment #2 Due |
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**Recommended Reading:**  

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<th>Week 8</th>
<th>February 23</th>
<th>Issues of ethics, research validity and rigor in participatory action research (Small Group meetings)</th>
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**Recommended Reading:**  

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<th>Week 9</th>
<th>March 2</th>
<th>Partnering, Community and Partnership Capacity</th>
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Recommended Reading:
Minkler, M., Breckwith-Vasquez, V., Tajik, M., & Petersen, D. 2008. “Promoting Environmental Justice through Community-Based Participatory Research: The Role of Community and Partnership Capacity.” HEALTH EDUCATION & BEHAVIOR.

Week 10
March 9
Evaluating CBPR partnerships, cultural and ethical considerations, dissemination and sustainability


Recommended Reading:

Final Paper Due on SmartSite March 16, 2010 by 11:30pm

Other Recommended Readings:


Tuhiwai-Smith, Linda. 2002. Notes from Down Under (Ch. 5) and Articulating an Indigenous Research Agenda (Ch. 7). In Decolonizing Methodologies. London/New York: Zed Books Ltd. Pgs. 95-103 and 123-137.

 References for working with youth and Youth Participatory Action Research