

SRSC 520: Community Based Research Methods Fall 2018

Instructor

Dr. Dana Cuomo
Office: Diversity & Community Studies House
Office Phone: 270-745-2729
Office Hours: Thurs 1-3pm, or by Appt.
Email: dana.cuomo@wku.edu

Course Description

The course examines the history, theory, practices, politics, ethics and methods of community-based, participatory action research (CBPAR). Community-based and participatory approaches to research involve the collaborative undertaking of research and other activities between scholars and communities. As a methodology, CBPAR is founded on philosophies and practices derived from radical pedagogy, feminist, anti-racist, and postcolonial perspectives. This type of research comprises research, education and action that is oriented toward seeking social justice and change. This course will operate on two interrelated dimensions, focusing on: 1) the theoretical traditions underlying different approaches to community-based research, and 2) the practical techniques for designing and conducting CBPAR projects, with an emphasis on qualitative methods. With this intertwined focus on methodology (theories about the research process) and methods (tools for gathering data), this course examines the way CBPAR disrupts and destabilizes distinctions between theory and practice, the power relationship between the researcher and those researched, and traditional forms of knowledge production.

Learning Objectives

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify the principles of community-based participatory action research methodologies.
- Demonstrate critical understanding of the relationship between research methodology, social justice, community and sustainability.
- Apply data collection procedures and analyze the resulting data.
- Evaluate the quality and appropriateness of community-based participatory action research studies reported in the literature.

Required Texts

- Kindon, S., Pain, R., and Kesby, M. 2007. *Participatory Action Research Approaches and Methods: Connecting People, Participation and Place*. Routledge: New York. ISBN-10: 0415599768
- Stoecker, R. 2013. *Research Methods for Community Change: A Project-Based Approach* (second edition) Sage: Los Angeles. ISBN-10: 1412994055
- Additional required course readings will be available on Blackboard.

Course Website

Since this is an online class, the Blackboard (Bb) website will be our virtual classroom. All students must have strong Internet access, the latest version of Bb compatible browsers, and familiarity with Bb tools (see Blackboard Resources for Online Learners). If you have Internet, Bb problems, or troubleshooting issues take these up with IT support or by calling 270-745-7000. Please allow 24 hours response time to emails during the week, and 48 hours on the weekend.

Course Assessment

Grades will be calculated on a 600-point scale, the standard grading system at the graduate level. Grades lower than C may not be used in meeting degree or non-degree program requirements:

539.5 - 600pts A
479.5 - 539pts B
419.5 - 479pts C
359.5 - 419pts D
< 359pts F

Discussion Posts	150
Tradition of Inquiry Critique Paper	100
Participatory Mapping Assignment	75
Interview Assignment	75
Backwards Proposal Assignment	200
Total	600

Course Assignments

Additional guidelines to assist you in completing the required assignments for this course are posted on Bb. These guidelines must be followed for all submitted assignments.

Discussion Posts (150 points):

The format for this course will be a cross between a seminar and field lab; some assignments will serve to sharpen your critical faculties in thinking about CBPAR, while other assignments will give you on-the-ground experience in CBPAR research techniques. Consequently, the way we use the discussion board will shift to reflect the focus of each course module. Most modules will require discussion board participation, with the specific details - including discussion prompts, deadlines and point values – clearly delineated in each module. Additionally, the online discussion board mirrors attendance and participation in a traditional classroom. Students who miss more than three discussion boards will receive ‘zero’ points for the missed discussion board and an additional 60-point penalty deducted from your final grade.

Tradition of Inquiry Critique Paper (100 points):

Drawing on assigned readings, this formal writing assignment asks you to critique the limitations of traditional methodologies for conducting research with communities focused on social change and identify how the methodological approach of CBPAR addresses these limitations. The Tradition of Inquiry Critique paper will be approximately 1500 words and will incorporate your original analysis of themes discussed in the assigned readings and the SRSC 520 discussion board (see additional guidelines on Blackboard).

Participatory Mapping Assignment (75 points):

Participatory mapping, or ‘community-based mapping’ is a common tool used to represent the spatial knowledge of local communities. This is a research method based on the premise that local residents possess expert knowledge of their local environments. Participatory maps often represent a socially or culturally distinct understanding of landscape and reflect information generally excluded from mainstream or ‘official’ maps. Maps created by community residents represent the place in which they live, and work to show the elements that a community perceives as important. For this assignment, you will execute a small-scale participatory mapping project and reflect on the process used to create the maps, as well as the findings gleaned through this method (see additional guidelines on Blackboard).

Interview Assignment (75 points):

In-depth, qualitative interviewing is another common tool in CBPAR projects. For this assignment, you will recruit an individual who agrees to participate in a formal interview. You will then create an interview guide, conduct the interview, transcribe your notes or audio recording, code your interview data to identify themes, and reflect on this assignment by addressing key points discussed in our assigned readings (see additional guidelines on Blackboard).

Backwards Proposal Assignment (200 points):

A “backwards” proposal starts with an already published CBPAR project and imagines the research proposal that the author(s) might have written prior to data collection. This assignment will be split into a series of memos that will be due over the course of the semester. You will write in the first person, since that is how you would write your own CBPAR proposal. Early in the semester, you will submit a memo identifying your chosen CBPAR project. You will then submit a memo identifying the problem (why is the issue important/urgent or interesting) and why CPBAR is the best approach for addressing this problem. You will then submit a memo with your research questions, hypotheses and description of your data collection procedures. Your next memo will address data analysis & management, ethical concerns & IRB compliance, and the verification & validity concerns associated with this project. Your final memo will put all the pieces together and include a conclusion (see additional guidelines on Blackboard).

Course Policies

Please schedule a time to speak with me if you have any questions about the following policies:

Late or Missing Work

Assignments are due as indicated in the course schedule. All assignments must be completed on time, and must be submitted through the Bb course site. Late assignments will be penalized (see assignment guidelines for specific point deductions). Save and back up your work often on an external device and/or server.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, 1074. SARC can be reached by phone at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 V/TTY] or email at sarc.connect@wku.edu. After contacting SARC, please email me so that we can work out access and accommodations.

Academic Integrity

This course assumes students will present their own work, and will participate on all assignments with integrity. The WKU policy prohibiting academic dishonesty states: “The maintenance of academic integrity is of fundamental importance to the University. Thus it should be clearly understood that acts of plagiarism or any other form of cheating will not be tolerated and that anyone committing such acts risks punishment of a serious nature.” Plagiarism occurs when a student copies, without proper citation intentionally or unintentionally, the ideas or words of another. It is a violation of academic integrity to use words or ideas that are not your own anywhere in this course (assignments, discussion posts, etc.) To avoid academic dishonesty, see the WKU library resources on avoiding plagiarism. If you are unsure, ask a librarian, the Writing Center, or your professor. Familiarize yourself with the WKU Student Code of Conduct, and the SRSC [Code of Ethics](#)

Title IX Policies

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU’s Title IX Sexual Misconduct/Assault Policy (#0.2070) at

[Sexual Misconduct/Assault Policy](#) and Discrimination and Harassment Policy (#0.2040) at [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#). Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson, 270-745-5398 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121. Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are “Responsible Employees” of the University and **MUST** report what you share to WKU’s Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU’s Counseling and Testing Center at 270-745-3159 or see this list of [sexual misconduct resources](#)

Course Schedule

Module 1: Welcome & Introduction to CBPAR
Week of Aug 26

Module 2: CBPAR – Methodological Roots & Approaches
Week of Sept 2

Module 3: Critiques, Ethics & Logistical Dilemmas of CBPAR
Week of Sept 9

Module 4: CBPAR & Institution Review Boards
Week of Sept 16

Module 5: Navigating Positionality & Research Relations
Week of Sept 23

Module 6: Putting Theory into Practice
Week of Sept 30

Module 7: Introduction to CBPAR Projects
Week of Oct 7 (Fall Break)

Module 8: Participatory Mapping
Week of Oct 14

Module 9: Interviewing
Week of Oct 21

Module 10: Observation & Making Fieldnotes
Week of Oct 28

Module 11: Offline Work Week
Week of Nov 4

Module 12: Coding Data
Week of Nov 11

Module 13: Proposal Writing
Week of Nov 18 (Thanksgiving)

Module 14: Evaluating, Analyzing & Verifying Data
Week of Nov 25

Module 15: Writing, Outcomes & Other Products
Week of Dec 2

Module 16: Backwards Proposal Due
Week of Dec 9 (Finals Week)