Course Objectives

The central questions guiding this course concern the challenges, theoretical models and best practices of academic research and advocacy relationships. The goal of this course is to help students who expect to make careers either as academics or nonprofit policy/research staff to navigate the challenges of bridging the gap between the academy and community-based organizations and to become familiar with models for academic/community partnerships, and accrue experience forging these partnerships. To accomplish these goals (a) the course instructors join extensive experience in both academic research and the non-profit sector; (b) course readings draw from the growing literature on how to establish researcher/activist partnerships along with exemplar successes and failures (c) course sessions will often include other experts who are actively joining research and advocacy in various non-profit sectors (e.g., environment, housing, health disparities, economic justice, immigration, media reform); (d) students develop a working relationship by mutual agreement with a non-profit organization; and (e) a portion of each course session is devoted to trouble-shooting with regard to student projects. Our goal is to equip students with the experience and knowledge they need to successfully bridge the academic/community divide in a way that benefits both the career development of the student and affiliated non-profit organizations.

Course Eligibility

This course requires that students have basic research skills that they can bring to bear in a researcher/advocacy organization partnership. Doctoral students in and beyond the Annenberg School for Communication are welcome. Masters level students are also welcome, but need to acquire permission from the instructors.

Academic Integrity is Important!
The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University’s Academic Integrity code as detailed in the campus guide. It is the policy of the School of Communication to report all violations of the code. Any serious violations or pattern of violations of the Academic Integrity Code will result in the student’s expulsion from the Communication program.

**Statement for Students with Disabilities**

Any student requesting academic accommodation based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to your instructor (or TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is 213-740-0776.

Office Hours: Because the required fieldwork is time sensitive, faculty guidance should be sought by email or phone in between class sessions. On campus meetings may be set by appointment.

**Conduct of Class Sessions**

Students are expected to play an active role in shaping class discussion. To that end, students will be asked to take responsibility to lead discussions of the week’s readings and may be asked to present a brief summary of the articles covered and discussion questions.

**Components of Course Evaluation**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seminar Participation</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Facilitation</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Project Research Work Plan</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Project Presentation (20 minutes)</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Project Final Paper</td>
<td>30</td>
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**Community Research Project**

Students will conduct, either alone or in a small group, a community-based research project using a model of community-based participatory research. Students are expected to engage in a systematic inquiry, making use of whatever methodological approaches seem appropriate to the research and that they have the knowledge to apply.

The instructors will help students identify potential community organizations, though students also may use their own contacts and resources. The first class session includes a ‘meet and greet’ session where potential students and potential partnering organizations discuss specific projects that partnering organizations would like conducted will be held several weeks prior to the beginning of class.
Appropriate topics for research that could be conducted within the semester timeframe might be:

- A small population study, e.g., a study of the demographic and spatial characteristics (e.g., physical ecology of roads, parks, schools, etc) of a specific geo-ethnic community.
- A policy analysis
- A community needs/resource assessment or asset mapping
- An evaluation of a program which may include development of survey instruments or development of a focus group protocol
- A study designed to improve organizational functioning
- Research en route to a ‘best practices’ analysis or tool kit

Doctoral candidates may, with instructors’ approval, design a related research project that will support the progress of their dissertation.

The student, working with the partnering organization, will develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that specifies the nature of the research, the tasks the researcher will be responsible for, identify supervision of the project on behalf of the community partner, agreements for regular meetings, and a clear time line for the conduct of the project. These MOUs are due the third week of the semester.

Although it’s desirable to develop and complete a research project, given the constraints of the semester, it’s understood that with some fieldwork projects the process is the product. Therefore, keeping detailed notes of the process as it unfolds is recommended.

The **final course paper** has two components and each will be given equal weight in grading.

(1) The **final fieldwork paper** should be prepared in a way so that it is of optimal value to the collaborating community organization, even if this means departing from academic conventions. It is strongly encouraged that reports to community organizations begin with an Executive Summary unless such a summary is inappropriate to the findings or audience. The length of the fieldwork paper will vary according to the nature of the project and the mutually-agreed-to expectations about the report’s purposes.

(2) A “**reflection epilogue**” that is not intended for the community organization, and that details your challenges, encounters with power differentials, cultural differences, and otherwise illustrates your hands-on engagement with the central questions of the course. It is strongly recommended you keep weekly notes to enrich your end-of-semester reflections. Please consider, what if anything, you would do differently if you were embarking on a new community-based research project.

**Seminar Topics & Readings**
Students will be asked to lead discussion of the week’s readings. These overviews should be designed to summarize salient points from the reading for other students and engage them in dialogue about it. Please focus on the main argument of the reading, ways in which the argument reinforces or challenges other readings, and any elements that you find particularly germane to the class’ research projects. Research reports may be included in student reading assignments. These should be read with an eye to the process of the research and their presentation, not the content per se.

All readings will be available by email as PDFs from the instructors unless a hyperlink is included. The course is designed with a coherent trajectory in mind but sometimes the availability of guest speakers makes that trajectory a little more jagged than we’d like. Please read the readings with an eye to sharing in class the way in which insights in the readings are or are not relevant to executing your partnership.

Prior to the first class meeting, we will provide students with a foundational course reading (Boyer, E. L. (1996). The scholarship of engagement. Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 49(7), 18–33. and several questions to prepare for the first class session.

**Class 1/January 10: Course Overview and Initial Partner Meetings**

Instructors’ overview of the course and discussion of the student partnerships. Introduction to community organization staff and projects. An MOU between students and an organization will be due on February 1st.

**Readings**

Optional: Written from the point of view of university researchers seeking to establish partnerships, the Community-Campus Partnerships for Health curriculum is an interesting counterpoint to Comm 653. Throughout the partnership-building process, you may find it a useful reference. It includes discussion and questions of many aspects of the relationship-building process. There are also useful sections on funding, dissemination of results and sustaining partnerships. [www.ccph.info](http://www.ccph.info).

DataCenter also has toolkits online. Find particularly relevant ones at [http://www.datacenter.org/research-tools/research-planning/](http://www.datacenter.org/research-tools/research-planning/).

**Class 2/January 17: Challenges in Advocacy/Academic Partnerships from a Community-Based, Participatory or Collaborative Research Perspective.**

Guest Speakers: Minhee Son, Ph.D. candidate USC/Annenberg and Eileen Ma, former organizer, Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance (now executive director API
Equality-Los Angeles.

**Readings**


**Class 3/Jan. 24: Challenges in Advocacy/Academic Partnerships from a Community-Based, Participatory or Collaborative Research Perspective.**

Guest Speakers: Saba Waheed, The Data Center; Angela Alvarez, IDEPSCA (Instituto de Educacion Popular de Sur del California)

**Readings**


Clawson, Dan; Robert Zussman; Joya Misra; Naomi Gerstel; Randall Stokes; Douglas L. Anderton; and Michael Burawoy. *Public Sociology: Fifteen Eminent Sociologists Debate*
Class 4/Jan 31: USC Case Study

Guest Speakers; Carmen Gonzalez, Melissa Brough, USC/Annenberg Ph.D. candidates to discuss Mobile Voices

Readings

Please search “mobile voices” on the www.hastac.org blog. You may find other posts of interest by searching for various relevant tags. Be sure to check out http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vL5utjMK8Us&feature=player_embedded


Class 5/Feb 7: Strategies for Program Evaluation

Guest Speakers: Tony Bautista La Causa/YouthBuild and Robin Bishop, doctoral student, USC School of Education and Evelyn Moreno, M.A., USC/Annenberg.

Readings


Class 6/Feb 14: The Metamorphosis Project: A Communication Infrastructure Approach to Social Change through Partnership with Grassroots Organizations

Sandra Ball-Rokeach will lead this discussion.
Guest Speakers: Tania Picasso, Garrett Broad, Ph.D candidates USC/Annenberg.

Readings


Chen, N. N.-T, Dong, F., Huang, J., Ball-Rokeach, S., Parks, M., & Huang, J. Building a new media platform for local storytelling and civic engagement in ethnically diverse neighborhoods. New Media & Society.


**Class 7/February 21: Strategies for Program Evaluation 2**

Guest speakers: Cheryl Tawede Grills, Associate Dean, Bellarmine College of Liberal Arts, Loyola Marymount University. Dr. Grills will discuss her work evaluating social justice and social change work.

**Class 8/Feb 28: More USC/ASC Case Studies**

Guest speakers: Lila Guirguis, Director, Magnolia Network; Jose Ramos, Director of Community Services, Children’s Bureau of Southern California

Bowie, Patricia C. Getting to Scale: The Elusive Goal. Magnolia Place Community Initiative, Case Family Programs. (no date).

**Class 9/March 6: USC/ASC Case Studies**

George Villanueva, Ph.D. candidate, USC/Annenberg. George will discuss his experience working on a HUD project in Northeast L.A.

**Spring Break March 13, 2012**

Blogs are a way for academics and activists to develop a shared discourse and to disseminate traditional research. Find a blog post that is analyzing or disseminating academic research in your project’s focus area.

**Class 10/March 20 - The Influence of Money. The Influence of Ideas.**
There may be additional readings assigned later in the semester.

**Readings**


**Class 11/March 27: Outside The U.S. Context**

Guest Speaker: Doe Mayer, Chair of Film and Television Production at USC's School of Cinematic Arts and Professor in the Annenberg School for Communication. Mayer will discuss the challenges of conducting research outside the U. S. context and the role of documentary film in such projects. Doe will show excerpts from her film *Women Connect!*

**Readings**


Class 12/April 3 Edutainment

Sheila Murphy, Associate Professor, USC/Annenberg. Sheila will discuss the work of the Hollywood Health & Society program at USC.

Readings

Readings will be provided later in the semester.

Class 13, 14 – April 10 & 17 – Student Presentations

Class 15: April 24 – Conclusions: University-Community Partnerships

Final papers due April 24.

In this session, we will discuss challenges and strategies for developing courses of this kind within the university. Recommended reading for that discussion:

Readings

Whelan, James. “Are academics irrelevant? Case studies of university collaboration with community-based environmental advocates.”


Optional: Engaged Scholarship in Promotion and Tenure Guidelines. http://studentaffairs.uncg.edu/cbr/promotionandtenure/ includes several resources designed to help community-engaged scholars navigate the tenure process.